

OLD ENGLISH
HOMES



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OLD ENGLISH HOMES.

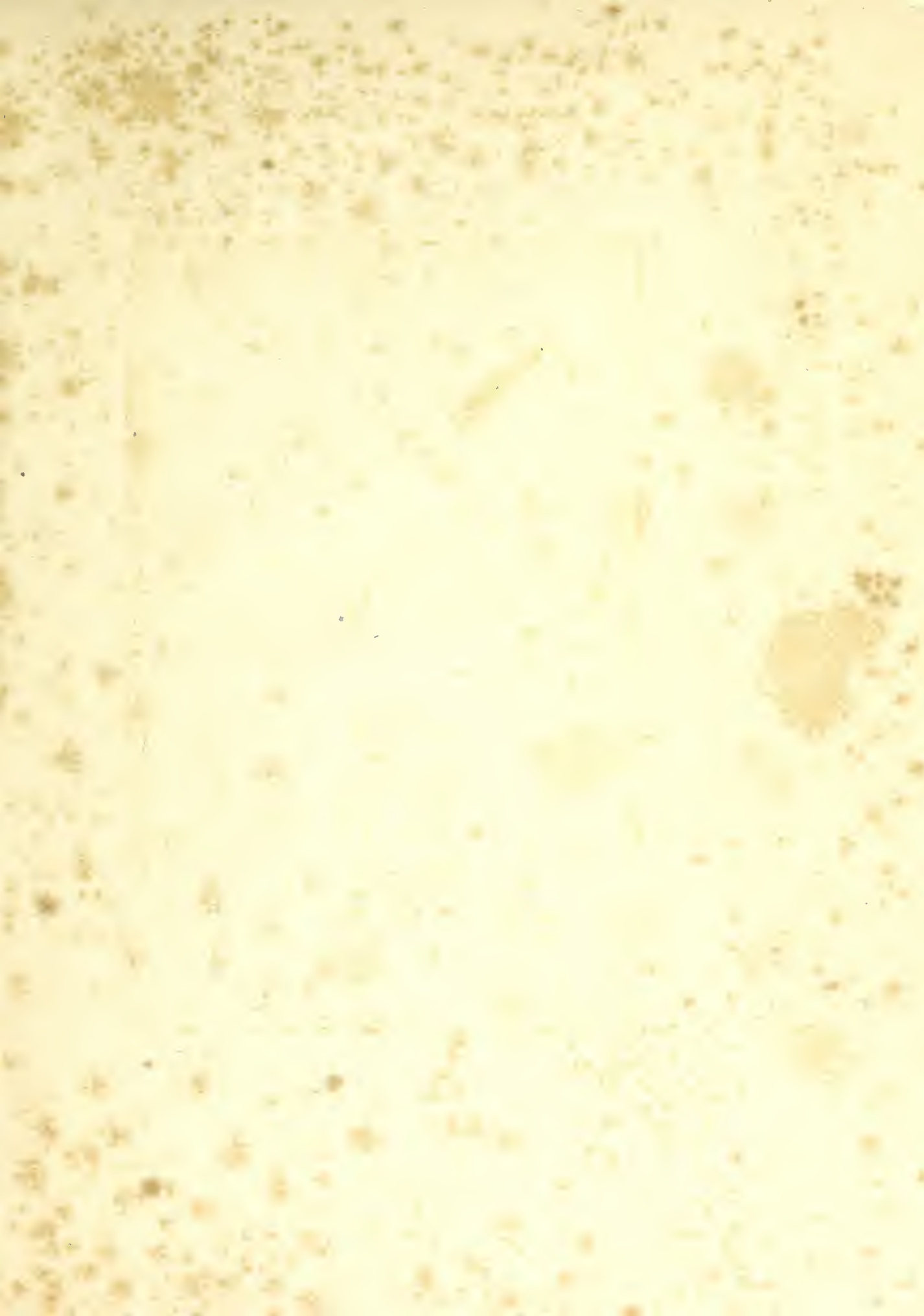


“Love thou thy land, with love far-brought
From out the storied Past, and used
Within the Present, but transfused
Through future time by power of thought.”

THE LAUREATE.







OLD ENGLISH HOMES

A SUMMER'S SKETCH-BOOK.



BY STEPHEN THOMPSON,

AUTHOR OF "SWISS SCENERY," ETC.



THE ILLUSTRATIONS BY THE AUTHOR.

LONDON:

SAMPSON LOW, MARSTON, LOW AND SEARLE,

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P R E F A C E.

THE public career of most men occupies but the briefer portion of their lives, and History, busy with this, is often neglectful of the private life and domestic surroundings which after all fill up the greater part of human existence.

Happily, the existing old Halls and Manor-houses—once the homes of so many of those whose names are inseparably associated with this country's annals—are neither few in number nor widely separated.

Our purpose has been confined to the selection of a few of the most interesting of these residences as types of the whole class; and while sketching on the spot their external aspects as they exist *to-day*, we have blended with the descriptions those picturesque associations that everywhere group themselves around old English homes.

A greater number of subjects would have reduced our sketches to mere outlines—a finished picture of any one of them would alone have filled a volume.





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IGHTHAM MOTE.

THE road leads to-day through one of the least frequented though one of the most beautiful districts in all our southern shires. It winds its upward way by a series of gentle ascents, through rich woods, beneath the shelter of overhanging trees, past fruitful orchards, and hop-gardens, over the tall hedges of which the graceful hop-wreath droops in ripe golden clusters, wafting its grateful fragrance on every passing breeze. So gentle is the rise, which has been long going on, that no impression of it is conveyed to the mind, until at length a bend in the road reveals a glimpse beyond that tells the highest point has been attained.

Let us leave the highway, and by a short *détour* cross a field or two, and then along a path almost hidden by underwood, but soft with moss and noiseless to the tread, until at length we break through the tangled mazes of a dark copse, and come suddenly to the edge of the wood.

At our feet lies stretched out in the glowing sunlight a broad expanse of richly cultivated country : one of those beautiful English landscapes which excel all others in fresh green verdure, tender atmosphere, and simple loveliness.

Rather in gentle undulations than in fold upon fold lie the low soft hills, and far away to the south there is a distant haze, which hovers over a streak of silver, and tells that the edge of the horizon is compassed by the inviolate sea.

Amidst a wealth of rich dark woods, lying immediately at our feet, their luxuriant growth and density unbroken but at one spot, a shimmer of water is descried, and there, resting like a bird on its smooth unbroken surface, we catch the first glimpse, dimmed and poetized by distance, of that unique specimen of the old moated manor-house, "Ightham Mote."

Approach nearer! the vague outlines take form and shape, and life is indicated, as the grey smoke from old tower and Elizabethan gable wreathes itself fantastically in the cool morning air. The house bears, to the tutored eye, evidence of belonging to different periods and styles ; but the waves of time have rolled over the old place so quietly and unheededly, that they have softened down asperities here, and not altogether congruous additions there—welding the whole into harmony of form and colour, even as Time, the great artist, often

"For a face not beautiful
Does more than beauty for the fairest face can do."

Indeed, the great charm cast everywhere over the place is

that most subtle of all charms, which time alone can give. Time,—stealthy, noiseless, unhalting, remorseless time,—has fed like slow fire on roof-tree and hall, covering his work—as if in tender pity—with abundant ivy, and moss, and lichen, and all kinds of creeping things which, in October days, flush out in hectic hues that change the old moated house to a poem in colour ; deepening every day into a blaze of softened splendour, yet hushed and subdued into pensiveness by “the sad music of the falling leaf.”

To this treacherous loveliness the sheltered position of the old Mote lends its adventitious aid. Except from one quarter, the wind scarce breathes on the fiery leaves, and they live on, increasing in variegated splendour ; drooping, iris-dyed, from every projection in long Persian fringes, like the long lashes of consumption ; putting on a yet more unearthly loveliness from day to day, until suddenly the end comes,

“The sunset of the year.”

Swiftly and implacably as fate, the wind from the accessible quarter one day leaps down like a wolf on the fold, the brave show is scattered and gone, and expectant Winter leaps into his throne at a bound, and henceforth for a season reigns in undisturbed possession.



If there be one phase more than another of English life and English scenery that the laureate succeeds in transferring to his broad yet elaborated canvas, in graceful line and with happiest touch, it is the peculiar and subtle atmosphere that envelopes old English halls—their broad parks and immortal elms, grey tower, and lonely moated grange. “Burleigh House,” “Audley Court,” and “many-towered Camelot” are pictures in words, of which we never tire !

Half hid in some of England's greenest vales, many fine specimens of the old moated hall still exist : moated as in days gone by. The entrance is often under a portcullis below a small square tower pierced with loop-holes for purposes of defence. The visitor then finds himself at once in a little court-yard, redolent of the past, and full of “picturesque bits,” one side of the quadrangle still displaying, as in *Ightham Mote*, its own domestic chapel and high-roofed hall. We refer not here to stately castles held by patrician families of powerful influence—not princely Camelots or even lordly Knoles—but to quiet ancient halls of lesser pretensions, full of secluded sweetness and quiet self-sufficiency. There they stand—the passing traveller may heed them or may heed them not—as the grey smoke from some old gable hidden in trees alone betrays their presence. The busy hum of cities far away never steals across the well-wooded shelter of the beech-crowned hills. Everything around them is tranquillizing—the tranquillity of

rural sights and sounds. The grey postman from the market town, a few miles away, may be traced at least half an hour in advance ere he pulls the bell at the old postern-gate. The dun cow comes to the hedge and sleepily gazes over as he wends his way through meadows gleaming with cowslips and buttercups, and scented like a very nosegay of sweets. The blackbird in the orchard does not interrupt his song as he passes. An unchanged institution is the rural postman in such districts as that in which stands Ightham Mote. He is the bearer of many small wares, as well as letters :—the doctor's draught, the young ladies' berlin wool "to match," the house-keeper's weekly packet of brown snuff, the new ribbon for the maids, and, above all, the local gossip of the country round. As he waits for his accustomed stoup of nut-brown ale, it is not possible to identify him with his hurrying city contemporary.

The little thatched and rose-trellised cottages hard by look as if they had always been what they are—no marks of change or chance about them—"smiling every one, as though the dwellers therein never died, and all this earth slumbered in perpetual peace."

In September the *English vintage* may be seen around here in its most picturesque setting. The hops grown in this part of Kent are those that grow only in the richest soil; the varieties known as "goldings" and "grape," the most beautiful and the most rare of all others. They grow to a much greater height, requiring poles of sixteen or eighteen feet in length, up which they run, twining around them always

with the sun, from east to west, until they reach the top. This they crown when ripe with a feathery tuft hanging down in large and beautiful bunches. The vines are years before they attain their full growth, although while growing they bear hops each season after the first one. The plant, or bine, is severed near the ground when the hops are ripe, and the pole pulled with all its fruit upon it. The stump then lies apparently dead until the following spring, when reawakening nature, that lets loose the new-born springs, and turns the leafless woods into love's glad home, also revives the seemingly lifeless hop-plant, and it puts forth buds, and twists and curls under the sun-ray from east to west again, and each year will climb farther up the pole until its maximum growth is reached. A long life is then before it; whatever the chances of the "crop" may be, the plant lives. The "fly," the "mould," the blight may come, and, in a single night, bring ruin and despair; "honey-dew" may deck every hill with its mysterious foam, "otter-moths," "red-spider," may sit daily at the costliest of banquets, but the evil dies with the year, and the hop-plant lives, and sleeps away even the memory of it during the long winter under ground, for, though but a stump appears above the earth, the roots extend in wide ramification below. We have in our own garden hop-plants that we know to have been set as far back as 1814, as luxuriant as ever: old fellows that have helped to brace generations of English "hearts of oak."

Ightham Mote is one of these ancient homesteads, moated still, which may be singled out as a type of its class. Let us



THE HOUSE OF THE
LORDS OF THE MANOR

sketch it, reverently and lovingly! The mellowed tones of the old timber-framed gables delight the eye as mere pieces of colour, but their seamed and wrinkled face is full of quips and cranks, and strongly marked individuality. Like the ancient families who inherit them, these, in some sense, their outer garments, are full of characteristic traits and meanings. There is an expression in the acuteness of that right-hand gable, and an odd crank lurks in the warped and twisted curve of that richly carved bargeboard of the time of Queen Elizabeth. There is a generous fulness in the eaves, like the nobler breadth of skirt and amplitude of sleeve in the garments of Sir Roger de Coverley, which contrast painfully with the meagreness of modern attire. A coquettish air seems hidden in the long low lines of that diamond-shaped casement which has flashed back the sunsets of some hundred years; and a cozy comfortable look in the gathered wimple of the low doorway in the court-yard. The aged banisters have a wheezy dignified creak as you ascend the stairs; the antique oaken-cased clock, innocent of French abomination, reposes in a snug corner in the recess, "beating out the little lives of men." It did so, and wore the same look, when we were boys, long ago. So shall it be when we are gone. There is an individuality in the tick of these old clocks. We know it as well and as distinctly from any other tick as the voice of an old, old friend, the beginning of whose friendship we cannot even remember.

Soft warm moss of richly variegated colour rests upon the

roof, and dark ivy enfolds it lovingly and tenderly. Can one think of the old homestead in absence as anything but a personality? Old associations cluster round every object. Life has taken root with the old trees that overshadow it. Old sorrows and old joys put forth tendrils that twine around every gable and every fireside in the house. Old associations cling to us with desperate tenacity; new ties may weaken the force of the old ones, and other scenes plant their memories in the arid sod beneath which lies the grave of earlier ones, but there are times when some trivial incident touches a chord that reawakens them as with a bound, and they reassert their power with undiminished force and freshness. With what fine poetic insight the authoress of "Adam Bede" observes, "The secret of our emotions never resides in the bare object itself, but in its association with our own past; as well might the unsympathetic observer put on his spectacles to discern odours." How different is that life often led in cities, where, if the tide of life runs fiercely and fast, it is at the same time thin and shallow. The marks of the past are sooner obliterated; everything goes headlong, and no man's life is rounded off into one fair, flowing, harmonious whole, but has a jerky, disjointed look, seen on the canvas of time. Rarely can it be viewed with its own appropriate background of associations. Frequent removals constantly uproot all the hallowing past in family ties and associations. Dwellings, built in rows precisely alike, and expressionless as huge packing-cases,

have little about them to cling to the memory. Like ready-made clothes they are made to fit any one. Not the liveliest imagination could invest the interior of one of those stuccoed fronts with a ghost story. What a ghastly un-picturesque ghost it would be! in drapery, too, of repulsive *machine-made* grave-clothes! It is surely a subject for serious thought, writes our great art-critic, in his "Lectures on Architecture," whether it might not be better for many of us if, instead of always hoping to get larger and finer ones, if, on attaining a certain position in life, he determined, with God's permission, to choose a home in which to live and die; a home not to be increased by adding stone to stone and field to field, but which, being enough for all our wishes at that period, we should be satisfied with for ever. Consider this, and also whether we ought not to be more in the habit of seeking honour from our descendants than our ancestors, thinking it better to be nobly remembered than to be nobly born; and striving so to live, that our sons and our sons' sons, for ages to come, might still lead their children reverently to the doors out of which we had been carried to the grave, saying, "Look! this was his house: this was his chamber."

The history of certain spots and places often largely illustrates our national life, and some of the old manor-houses of England remind us of hundreds of years of her annals.

Where that small stained window, rich in the quaint angular drawing characteristic of early Christian art, just

peeps through the abundant creepers, is the little domestic chapel. It is past use now, but it possesses still a richly carved oaken rood-screen, closed at the bottom, and surmounted by small feathered arches, supported on circular-banded shafts, a wooden barrel ceiling, pulpit, benches, and priest's chamber. The entrance for *the family* was straight from the private apartments beneath the second gable east of the rood-screen. The doorway below (the subject of our illustration), covered with convolvulus and jessamine, was the entrance by which the servants and dependants gained access to the body of the chapel west of the partitioning screen. The whole is not larger than a very modest dining-room. Let us sit down on the grey mounting-stone in the little court-yard, and, in imagination, sail up the stream of time. The chapel or oratory dates from a period a hundred years earlier than the parliamentary troubles of the Stuarts. Prayers may have been offered up from that worm-eaten reading-desk the night before Naseby's fight. When all was over, the morning dawn broke through the diamond-shaped windows of many such ancient houses as this, and shone upon some lordly length of manhood, all cut and hacked from the fight, waiting only to heal him of his wounds, ere smuggled across the Channel to French or Flemish shore :—a “proscribed Royalist.” From the opening beside the doorway a wooden bridge crosses the moat to the gardens : “a pleasaunce whose faire grassie ground is beatifide with many flowres.” In summer-days of old it might have served for the garden in Spenser's “*Faerie Queene*,” where :



“Eftsoones they heard a most melodious sound
Of all that mote delight a dainty eare.”

To its third or Elizabethan period belongs the large crumbling quadrangle on the hither side of the moat, containing stables once large enough for a troop of horse.

To the second period of its history, the time of Henry VII. and Henry VIII.,—an eventful time,—belongs the gateway-tower and the gateway, with its wooden doors, as well as the chapel and some portions of the hall. The manor then belonged to Sir Richard Clement, who was succeeded by his brother, whose daughter carried it, by marriage, to Hugh Pakenham. Here occurs a link that connects its story with that of the great Kentish shrine, Penshurst Place, and the Sidneys, but a few miles away. Sir Hugh Pakenham,—Henry VIII. temp.—had no male heirs, and his only daughter and successor married Sir William Sidney, the soldier of Flodden Field. Although Sir William Sidney had not then succeeded to Penshurst Place, he had a residence at Penshurst, and for some reason an arrangement was made by Sidney and his wife's father under which Ightham Mote was alienated and sold to Sir John Allen, Lord Mayor of London.

Farther up the stream we come to the Wars of the Roses, when the De Hauts, to whom it had always belonged, lived here. As early as the reign of Henry II., A. D. 1154, Ivo de Haut was in possession of the manor. To these days of the Plantagenets portions of the Mote can be traced, and the dining-hall can still boast of one of the rarest examples of roofing:

a relic not later in date than the reign of Edward II. During the reign of Edward III. his descendant, then Sir Henry de Haut, died possessed of it, and also his son and grandson, Nicholas de Haut. The next De Haut fell upon evil times for the old family, and, having taken the field for the Earl of Richmond, lost his Kentish estate by confiscation, and at Pontefract his head. Ightham Mote was then granted, by Richard III., to one of his own supporters, Robert Brackenbury, who was in that year Sheriff of the County of Kent. Robert Brackenbury was Lieutenant of the Tower when the two young princes, Edward V. and the Duke of York, were confined there, and, though refusing to enter into Richard's cruel designs, he yet for one night resigned the command to Sir James Tyrrell, under whom the foul murder was carried out. But Brackenbury was not destined to enjoy this pleasant Kentish acquisition long. Kings who bestow confiscated estates expect services in return, and, at Bosworth-field, the manorial usurper was slain, together with his master, and the Mote returned to the possession of the De Hauts.

In 1592, Sir Charles Allen, grandson of the Lord Mayor, sold Ightham Mote to Sir William Selby, Knt., of Northumberland, and the estate has ever since remained in the possession of descendants bearing the old name. In the "*Miscellanea Genealogica et Heraldica*" may be found some curious details of "the Will of Sir William Selby the elder of the Mote, 1610;" also of that of his nephew and successor, Sir William Selby the younger, who died in 1637, during the

period that Charles I. was attempting to govern the country without a Parliament. It is an exceedingly characteristic example of a seventeenth century will. We learn from it that Sir William, "being old and weake in bodie, but strong in minde," left the Mote to George Selby, "my cousen," as he repeatedly styles him, besides including him with "other my kindred," thereby contradicting the popular story that the estate was thus left "for the sake of the name." George appears to have been one of the sons of "my Nephewe Henrie Selbie, late dwelling near Billingsgate in London," who were also benefited by the will of Sir William the elder. He appears to have had a brother and nephews living, to whom he bequeathed estates in Northumberland. Another curious fact learned from this will is, that the famous Saracen's Head Inn, once so dear to antiquaries, and which belonged to the Selbys, originally bore the sign of the Crown. "Item, I giue and bequeeth vnto my said nephewe Sir, Ralphe Selbie, Knight, of Iwizell, Northumberland, all that my messauge or Inne sometime called the Crowne, now called the Sarasens Head, with the appurtenances," etc., etc. There were probably fine doings when, March 1, 1637, his body was "interr'd in the chancel of Ightham Church, under his Uncle's monument in the presence of Somerset and Rouge Croix, acting for Clarenceux," for he left what was then a large sum "to the poore at my buriall, by way of dole."

Since then the evening gold and the morning red have broken through those same lattice windows on successive

generations, bearing the old name : upon a succession of bold bright eyes, and fair young faces. Nor have the last hundred years, though free from civil strife, been less prolific in stirring incident ; but the arena of conflict is no longer by our own hearthstone. One wraps his colours round his breast on a blood-red field of Spain ; another “ploughs the wave ;” and of another, after years of hard service, it can only be said,—

“At Nile’s proud fight he died.”

Ightham Mote is a typical specimen of these old English homes, and we speak thus of it only as a representative of the class. Offshoots from many of such old stocks as these have peopled Virginian solitudes with the race, and perpetuated old English names that sounded on the ear with a strange familiarity as we read of bold raid and fiery charge in the battle-fields of the Southern States, the forest fighting of the wilderness of Spottsylvania, and the Shenandoah Valley : southern descendants who threw themselves into the fight, right or wrong, and fought in a way that showed, without any genealogical evidence, the source from which they sprang.

The sister of the great Lord Fairfax, Commander-in-chief of the Parliamentary Army, married Sir William Selby of Iwizell in Northumberland. The great general’s successor, Henry, fourth Lord Fairfax, was the ancestor of the American Fairfaxes. Mr. Clement Markham has related that this American branch has not degenerated, and, in the gallant



Rubus idaeus L.

struggle of Virginia for independence, its scions showed that they had inherited the chivalrous bravery of the Yorkshire stock. "When a senator of New York remarked to young Randolph Fairfax that he would not like to have a name already so famous if he could add nothing to it, the boy replied, 'It is the name of my ancestors, and, if they have made it famous, I at least will try to do nothing to impair its brightness.' He did more, he added to its lustre, and, after a life of unsullied purity, he found a hero's death at the battle of Fredericksbourg in 1862. His cousin, Eugene Fairfax, was slain at Williamsburg, and two other Fairfaxes were wounded in the battles of Virginia."

The dining-hall, with its lofty timber-framed roof, having sometimes beams and rafters supported on stone arches spanning the whole breadth of the room, brown and dim with age, is always a great feature in such houses, and especially so at Ightham Mote. What Christmas-tides and what "Comings-home" have been celebrated therein! There they sang the old songs, and told of daring adventures and dangers past, not perhaps unmingled with a traveller's exaggeration. And some of the bold race never came back to the old nest to shed their leaves, and at last have hands folded over breasts from which the fire, and the passion, and enterprise had long died out.

To come to our own time, how little is the change except in externals! Take the lad yonder, toying over the moat with a fishing-rod and basket, and, instead of the little deer-

stalking hat and shooting jacket, put on him the slashed doublet and ruffled sleeves of two or three centuries ago, and see how hard it would be to tell him from one of the old pictures in the corridor above. Like many another younger son of such old stocks, he too may go to the far east—how immeasurably farther in *their* day—and, should he live to be grey and leathery, will come back to the old homestead long years hence. After the hot fever of manhood, it is not the more recent deeds of our prime upon which we most love to dwell; dearer are the days of our youth. In the twilight we love to recall the sunny hours of morn; it is in the springtime of life memory loves to bask. The dying eagle drags its flight back to its own eyrie; the wounded deer to the shelter of its own green covert; the old Anglo-Indian best knows what *home* means and loves to come back where only can such echoes be awakened—to feel, like drops of rain on a parched soil, old thoughts and feelings steal over him, snatches of old music, for ever mute; to catch reverberations of life's morning time, and let the heart dream of bygone days in the fast darkening twilight, ere walking "the cold and starless road of death."

So, year by year, the happy days descend below the golden hills at the old Kentish manor, one day so like another that each seems but as yesterday come back again. Ever

"The sparrows chirrup on the roof,
The slow clock ticking, and the sound
The poplar makes."

Always, the cawing of the rooks, and the gradual sloping of the shadows towards the west.

But it is at night, when the wind sobs among the dark pines which back the old moated grange, that the peculiar influence of the antique is most felt. It seems then to express in its vague, undefinable utterance, feelings, longings, and emotions for which we possess no words. In the midnight stillness, with no other sound or sight but the dim shadow of the dark trunks athwart the chamber, the moan of the rising wind unlocks the doors that separate the material from the unseen and the infinite, and steeps the imagination in thoughts that never yet found expression. Its first far-off wail—as if mourning “the flight of the dark brown years”—is dreamy, fitful, and broken, yet full of tenderness and sorrowful regret; by and by it draws nearer and closer—sounding, as it wanders round the old gables, as if seeking admittance, like the voice of a thousand years ago—a sob of infinite yearning that suggests a sense of loss, of separation, and of desolation; the memory of

“Old, unhappy, far-off things,
And trials long ago,”

now swelling into keen and piercing tones, like those with which Pity pleads to Fate; now rising and falling in wild cadence of passionate longing, or infinite desire, breaking down at length in a wild burst of defeated, despairing agony. After dying away in utter silence it again returns, and, gathering fresh strength, suddenly rises in clear, impassioned accents,

like the language of some happier sphere. All we have been in days of yore comes back—comes back our lost youth ; come back our golden dreams ; come back our morning faith and boundless horizon !

To fancy's feverish ear the wind speaks a tongue intelligible, and sounds through the corridors of memory in trumpet-tones, or sweeps past in impetuous gusts like the rush of angels' wings, and, as we at length fall asleep, dies away in a mystic refrain of delicious sweetness, like a far-off echo of those deep songs of joy which mortal ear hath heard not.

Such is "Ightham Mote" as we remember it for nearly half a century, unchanged and seemingly unchangeable. Secluded as it is, it stands but thirty miles from the capital. We here take leave of it regretfully ; amidst the city's noise a vision of something utterly different re-visits us not seldom ; we see the grey smoke from hall and roof-tree curl upward through the distant trees ; we breathe again the fragrance of forgotten fields ; we see the setting sun lighting old windows with gleams of parting glory ; we hear the sough of the wind and the cawing of the hereditary rooks, and muse half doubtfully on the fact that another phase of existence so different still exists so near us in these days of subterranean railways and ocean telegraphs.



HEVER CASTLE.

IT is the loveliest period of the year! the glory with which the returning spring that makes the meadows green, and fills the silver woods with sunshine, comes, has come; and spring comes to the Kentish Weald with a fulness and luxuriance unknown in northern shires. And, when that wonderful awakening of the earth from its deathlike sleep takes place, it stirs the heart and imagination into strange ecstasies. March first heralds the approach of the glad time with a passionate blast that speaks like a trumpet through the woodlands hoar. Soon the sea-blue bird of the month flits by; the primrose, pale as *Fidèle's* face, peeps shyly forth from sheltered hollows and stream-fed glens, while, on sunny banks, violets cluster like stars, their delicate well-remembered perfume bringing back memories of other violets, and other springs. Then April, with her tearful eyes, goes by, and our path to-day is one long flower-sprent way where her step has been. Cowslips have everywhere unfolded their freckled urns of

pallid gold, the oxslip—half primrose, half cowslip—is in bloom, and anemones dance to the rude breeze in thousands. The larch has put forth all its crimson plumelets, the orchis displays its royal purple, the grass, in all its beautiful varieties, grows deep and free: the light air-grass, purple burnet, and the quake-grass so dear to childhood. Glassy pools grow white with the water-ranunculus as the spring advances; the ringdove's notes are heard in the woods, and those winged flowers, the butterflies, are everywhere, while, blithe and bold, the bee begins his pilgrimage anew.

The spring no longer creeps from valley to hill, hiding in mossy dells and sheltered places; the oaks and full-flowered chesnuts at Knole and Penshurst have clothed themselves in a wealth of greenest foliage, and their young transparent leaves, sparkling with sunlight, are dancing themselves giddy in the soft breeze.

And now the time we most love is come. The trees stand in shadowy masses. It is more than spring—scarcely summer. It is the time when spring and summer meet, and is full of the indescribable beauty which belongs to that period: Nature's version of the—

“ Maiden with the meek brown eyes,
In whose depth a shadow lies;
Her whose locks outshine the sun,
Golden tresses wreathed in one,
Standing with reluctant feet
*Where the brook and river meet,
Womanhood and childhood fleet.*”

The coyness of early spring-time has gone; over is the wooing, and the soft reply! The gayest flowers are now eagerly vying with each other in adorning themselves with colours that defy colourless words. The gladsomeness of the glad time diffuses itself over everything. It is all *abandon*. Sparkling streamlets hurry past sun-flushed woods deepening into richer shadow. Hedges are crowned with wild-roses, the meadows deep with buttercups; and above all there is “a charm of birds” filling the air with song, until the saddest heart cannot longer resist the influences shed around, although recollections too often fraught with odours of perished flowers and springs that return no more are awakened also.

In the peerless days of this sweet time, a pleasant ride of an hour or so from London suffices to reach Edenbridge, three miles from which, through the village, past farmhouses and cottages—pretty as English cottages only are, their windows lying open to the soft sweet-scented air, and their little porches garlanded with the climbing blue and white convolvulus—stand the grey moated walls of Hever: an *antique* of the purest and most interesting kind, equally attractive to the Anglo-Saxon race of both continents; one that fortunately cannot be uprooted or unearthed, and, with all its *entourage* lost, put under a glass case in a museum, to become a mere “object,” caged and seen under circumstances and surroundings with which its owners never foresaw it associated.

"Hever," though always termed a castle, is really but a castellated and moated house, and, though not even a large one, is a very perfect example of those erected in an age when comfort and security combined were the conditions most sought after.

These conditions had been made possible by the peace and safety brought to the kingdom by the great victories of Edward III., and it was at this period Hever was erected. Domestic architecture at this time took a new and distinct form; but, although other requirements, both for elegance and comfort, were called into play, a certain degree of security was far from being forgotten. The Norman castle or keep, with its massive walls and its greater strength and safety, but also its gloom and discomfort, became a thing of the past.

Hever Castle, as every one knows, owes its greatest celebrity to its association with one of the most tragical stories in English history. It was the birthplace of Anne Boleyn, wife of Henry VIII., the abode in which she passed her girlhood, and her residence during the years of courtship preceding that fatal marriage which was ended, but three years after, in the gleam of a bright axe and an unknown grave in the Tower.

The first castle was rebuilt by one of the Norman barons, William de Hever, temp. Edward III. The castle and entire estate were purchased, in the reign of Henry VI., by Sir Geoffrey Boleyn, mercer and Lord Mayor of London; but the Bullens (for so they spelled their name) were an



ancient and honourable Norfolk family, originally of French extraction, which had settled in Norfolk since the Norman conquest. Sir Geoffrey Boleyn had exchanged hawking and hunting for mercantile pursuits, and his success in amassing wealth showed that he knew how to stoop to conquer. The purchase of the Hever estate was one of the results of this money-making success. On the death at Hever of Anne's father, Sir Thomas Boleyn, K.G., Earl of Wiltshire and Ormond (grandson of Sir Geoffrey), who survived his hapless daughter but two short years, Hever was left without a male successor, Henry having also beheaded the son and heir, Anne's brother, Lord Rochford, on an infamous and utterly improbable charge. Indeed, the whole ghastly story, the shameless charges, the mockery of a trial, and the ferocity with which men were sent to the scaffold at the bidding of any one man whose tyrannical will the popular ideas of that age had invested with supposed divine rights, scarcely excite more astonishment than the patience with which people submitted to such a fate :

“ Lightly then
Was life laid down, and lightly was death mourn'd.”

Henry, upon the father's death, with shameless cupidity seized the estate in right of his deceased wife (!), and settled Anne of Cleves here after his divorce from her; and here she resided for sixteen years, dying at Hever in 1557, the fourth year of the reign of Queen Mary. Her long quiet

residence was unattended by any disturbing incidents, but the place must have throbbed with memories of her too recent predecessor. She must have sometimes felt the creeping of an eerie loneliness, or, with such a past around her, sometimes been affected by

“ All the inexplicable sounds that haunt
Turret and stair and lobbies in old houses,
When the wind stirs o’ nights.”

Until the hill is turned, just before reaching the castle from Edenbridge, little is seen of the place, but from that point it is very picturesque and striking, as a moated house cannot help being. The moat, fed from the Eden, entirely surrounds it. The principal front which first comes into view is the fortified part, but the whole of the beautiful south-west side, adorned with greenery, chequered with broken sun-shadows, and the old gable of the Long Gallery or Ball-room, are soon seen. As we descend, the hill behind shuts out anything less ancient from the field of view, and we step at once into the fifteenth century. The picture before us is that which Henry VIII. looked upon; the walls, perhaps, a little greyer, but nothing more. The landscape backing the Castle, except that it is less wooded, more land having been cleared, is the same in all its features, for nature changes least of all; and the same are the distant outlines of the country away by Crockham and Ide Hill, overlooking the Kentish Weald, and through which the monarch rode from the capital on his visits here. Yonder are the fifteenth

century stables, with sleeping-apartments above them, and a curious open gallery running along in front : stables where undoubtedly Henry's cavalcade stalled their horses, often spent by the bad roads around ; and tradition says that the king used often "to stick in the mud " as he drew near after nightfall, when he would blow his horn and summon the inmates of the Castle to his aid. And there, too, is the lattice from which Anne Boleyn, the mother of Queen Elizabeth, watched his coming, or waved her last *adieux*.

Outwardly Hever is unchanged. Its preservation is remarkable. The gatehouse, built of stone, is perfect, and its great strength, and bold machicolations, and triple portcullises make it impressive in a degree not commensurate with its size. The towers are pierced with loopholes through which missiles might be launched without exposing the defenders to reprisals. There are guard-rooms, and the usual defensive appliances, small, but regularly constructed.

The building is of course quadrangular, inclosing a courtyard, which is however much smaller than that of Ightham Mote. The courtyard was painted by Calderon as the background to his picture "Home after Victory," exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1867.

The principal apartments are the old hall, once a noble room of lofty proportions, and having the usual appurtenances of an old hall ; the dining-hall, or ordinary refectory for the family, a pleasant room looking across the moat ; Anne

Boleyn's bedchamber, finely panelled, containing some vestiges of furniture said to be of her period, and an antique-looking bed with heavy faded yellow curtains; and, perhaps best of all, the Long Gallery or Ball-room.

It is very long and narrow, the sides are of panelled oak, and the ceiling is also panelled. There is a large bay window which tradition has especially associated with Anne and her royal lover. The recess was also used for Henry's chair of state, when the neighbouring gentry were admitted to an impromptu levée. At the upper end of the gallery is a trap-door, which reveals a narrow passage leading to a gloomy chamber called the dungeon, but probably intended as a hiding-place in times of trouble. The gallery certainly belongs to the Tudor period, probably constructed by Sir Thomas Boleyn, the staircase windows having stained glass with the arms of the Boleyns, Butlers, and Howards.

In Anne's time it must have been a stately place, but is forlorn enough now. The rare and costly appointments that belonged to Hever have all been dispersed and scattered far and wide, and but very little of the Boleyn furniture remains. Some of the beautiful fire-dogs and other relics are at Knole. The handsome little clock,—probably designed by Holbein, who drew the designs of much of the goldsmiths' and chasers' work for Henry VIII.,—richly chased, engraved, and ornamented with *fleurs-de-lis*, surmounted with the arms of England, and bearing weights chased

with the initials of Henry and Anne within true lovers' knots, given by the king to Anne on the wedding-day, is at Windsor, having been purchased for her Majesty the Queen at the Strawberry Hill sale.

But, notwithstanding its desolate aspect, the *reality* of this apartment impresses one. There is no restoration; it is not an old gem re-set with incongruous additions, but has been left alone with Time and its own sad memories. The old oaken floor was undoubtedly oft trodden by the steps of Anne and her royal lover. Percy, her first love, had been forcibly removed from her path, and married out of hand; and she could not but see already reflected in eyes around, and in the increased deference of servants and retainers, how exalted a destiny it was to be Queen of England. At eve, the figure of bluff Hal looms large in the bayed and curtained recess; we almost hear the rustle of Anne's picturesque garments sweeping by; richly dressed visitors from near Penshurst and Chiddingstone and more distant Knole and Chevening tread the mazes of an antique dance: while from the open window float out on the summer night the sounds of music and song, and the dark moat glitters with the reflection of lighted flambeaux.

There is little more to see. Hever is not a place in which to lose one's self; is not like a garment too large for daily use; but small and close-fitting, revealing the wearer's shape in every movement. And so the Boleyns

are easily seen in every relic here. Altogether, the interior of Hever does not sustain the illusion awakened by its outward preservation. The trappings of state are gone, no banners float overhead, no arms or helmets deck the walls; but it is inhabited still; fires burn cheerfully on the old hearths, a sense of life, and the continuity of human interest which it conveys, are there, and the old place, for those who have ears for it, is full of—

“The gentle music of the bygone years.”

Like Knole, Hever re-appears in fragments on the walls of the Royal Academy. They are artists’ “stage-properties.” Some years ago Mr. Calderon and a few of his friends hired Hever Castle and went and lived there all summer. Beside the painters’ vivid presentments, how feeble are word-pictures to conjure up to the mind the grey forgotten Past. Yet we cannot leave Hever without limning in our sketch-book a few outlines of some of its brighter reminiscences.



It is an autumn afternoon, A.D. 1511; the old English early dinner is over. In the shade of the little courtyard the children play, attended by Simonette, the French gouvernante; or chase each other round the narrow path that separates the house from the moat. Surrey is there; there has been a family gathering, a christening probably,

at yonder church on the windy hill, for girls and boys were born, one every year, as Anne's father expressed it, like the harvest of his fields. The ladies knit, the gentlemen toy with the tall bossed Flemish drinking-glasses, and talk politics. It is the smaller room, that used as a dining-room at the present day. Visitors drop in who have ridden through autumn woods and by pleasant Kentish lanes, some from real amity, others perhaps only to look at the "Great Earl," Lady Boleyn's father. Few men were more worth looking at, or were held in greater honour, or had played a more distinguished part on the stage of time than Thomas Howard, Earl of Surrey. His word was said to be worth more than another man's oath. He is in his sixty-seventh year, but the fires of manhood are far from being extinct, for Flodden (1513) has yet to be fought and won, two years hence, and the forfeited dukedom of Norfolk restored to his house as the reward of that great victory, where thirteen earls and fifteen chiefs lay stretched in death beside the Scottish king. Still he has a long decade of years before him to enjoy his honours. The Lady Elizabeth, his eldest daughter, the beautiful and loving mother of Anne, sits at his feet, glad to be near him, now beaming on her husband, now watching the bright child who is one day to be Queen of England and mother of another Queen. Anne is ten years old, an elfin child with lustrous eyes, but without promise of her mother's beauty.

The day wears on, the shades of evening fall upon the

peaceful landscape,—the same we see to-day through the old Tudor windows,—the water-lilies rest tremulously on the bosom of the moat, and grow wan in the fading light, and fleecy vapours veil the rising of the harvest-moon. Without, the low mingled hum of pleasant rural sounds heard in the country at eventime floats by, mingled with the sound of the Curfew bell from the hill above. Within, there is a murmur of loving voices, and tones dear to ears that have fed for aye upon their accents and grown sensitive to the slightest shades of inflection expressing every degree of less or greater happiness. Hever in 1511 was a happy home. No clouds lowered on the horizon. The star of Surrey is in the ascendant. Boleyn, happy in his marriage and prosperous in his fortunes, has no past to mourn, and the future is full of promise.

And thus

“ through many a rosy change
The twilight dies into the dark,”

and night spreads the shadow of her wings over the peaceful picture. Would that, as on canvas, it could be for ever fixed; the waters of the moat for ever ripple round them, and isolate their happiness from change; Anne, her brother Rochford, and Mary ever play, Simonette looking on; the light of happy faces ever beam, the babble of happy voices ever flow.

But already the herald with inverted torch doth wait: one year more, and Surrey in despair—her husband away

at a foreign court—shall carry his favourite daughter to Howard House by Thames-side in order to summon all the aid that medical science could yield to avert the immutable decree. But that may not be, before the year is out she is laid in the Howard Chapel at Lambeth beside her race, and Anne is motherless.

“ Two hands across the breast,
Two pale feet cross’d in rest.
The race is won !”



It is 1522, Anne Boleyn has returned from the French Court, the same, yet not the same ; the boundless horizon of childhood is gone : shades of the prison-house our home already begin to close. Yet the soft light of early womanhood dwells in her glance, and, if she has lost something, she has gained more,—the “vision splendid” which ushers in the opening of full-fountained life is hers, and yet afar is the period when it fades into the light of common day.

Change has come also to Hever. The background is the same but the figures are different. In her mother’s place, a step-mother ; but one whom she could regard with affection. Her father is away on a diplomatic mission in Spain ; her brother at Oxford, her sister Mary married to Carey ; Anne moves among her books and flowers with a grace that Wyatt has sung in verse, and “sent up all his heart in this his

singing." Yet the impression left, whether derived from poet, historian, or chronicler, is, that her greatest charms were mental ones : perhaps the most irresistible of all ; for, though beauty may allure,

" 'Tis mind alone can chain the mind."

Hers was a rich full nature that shone through her eyes, and men were thrall to those bright orbs, scarce knowing why. She had drunk a double draught from the fountain of life, and blended the warmth of the South with the tender constancy of the deep-hearted Northern race. To a higher standard of culture and feminine accomplishments than usual, the studious literary tastes of her father had added a training that developed all her powers ; and Anne's long sojourn at the French Court, in the society of some of the most highly cultivated people in Europe, had given a grace and polish to her manner, that told of familiarity with a more advanced civilization than ours. Anne Boleyn must have met at the court of Francis that universal genius Leonardo Da Vinci, whose name Hallam asserts should stand foremost of all in the history of the fifteenth century. Grand in person, he seemed to carry about with him the atmosphere of the Medici, and Anne saw Da Vinci much as he looked but a few years before, when painting his famous fresco in the Palazzo Vecchio in rivalry with the younger Michael Angelo,—Bartolommeo and Raphael looking on !

What wonder that her wit and grace excited the envy of

the less richly gifted. Sir Thomas More's daughter Margaret recorded in her diary, "Flattery and Frenchified habits have spoiled her, I trow." Chateaubriant speaks of the collar band which she wore to conceal a large mole, resembling a strawberry, being blindly imitated by the rest of the maids of honour. The old French chronicler has left us a record of the exact costume she wore after her return from France.

"She had a bourrelet or cape of blue velvet turned with points ; at the end of each hung a little bell of gold. She wore a vest of blue velvet starred with silver, and a surcoat of watered silk lined with minniver, with large hanging sleeves, which hid her hands and concealed her peculiar finger from the curiosity of the courtiers ; her little feet were covered with blue velvet brodequins, the insteps were adorned each with a diamond star. On her head she wore a golden-coloured aureole of some kind of plaited gauze, and her hair fell in ringlets."

But all unite in showing that all else was subordinate to the light of those deep eyes. Henry VIII., who is said to have first seen her in the garden at Hever, went home to Westminster, and told Wolsey "that he had been discoursing with a young lady who had the wit of an angel and was worthy of a crown."

And here to-day this at once plain and beautiful girl, who afterwards caused so much trouble to Wolsey with her love affairs, tends her flowers, corresponds with Renée and Marguerite de Valois across the sea, and reads Chaucer!

Hever is still outwardly the Hever of Henry VIII. and Anne Boleyn. The moat occupies the same boundaries and level; the Eden flows into it as erst it flowed; its bright sparkling waters ripple round the grey walls as they did three hundred years ago,

“ And children bathe sweet faces in its flow
And happy lovers blend sweet shadows there.”

Were Anne to saunter down the flower-fringed path, and out the little gate, a volume of old Chaucer or Wyat in her hand,—just as of old,—should we be overcome with wonder ?



It is early summer, 1532. Henry VIII. is sojourning at his favourite Palace at Greenwich. The Thames is sparkling in the morning sun; high-prowed galleys, and a state-barge or two lie moored off the Palace, while various quaint river-craft drop lazily down the stream with the ebb-tide. What pleasanter than a gallop over the breezy Kentish hills, and through green oak-shadowed lanes hung with wild flowers and alive with singing birds, on such a morning as this? And where but to “Hever,” some twenty-five miles away inland? Anne Boleyn is now his bride-elect, and will welcome her royal lover with her sweetest smile and gentlest caress, nor heed though jealous enemies may find

a harsher term for these endearments, or believe them but ambitious, crafty wiles.

To horse, then! king and courtier, knight and esquire : a brilliant cavalcade, clattering through beechen woods and forest-glades, or galloping noiselessly along the soft turf by newly cleared paths, for roads were not then so perfect, nor so monotonous. Kentish yeomen stare as they pass fat homesteads, and children scamper into cottages to summon other children to see "the King" go by. The gay equipments, jewelled arms, and haughty bearing of these Tudor nobles and men-at-arms, who had, many of them, figured at the Field of the Cloth of Gold, made them appear in the eyes of such untutored yokels little less than demi-gods.

Away, over hill and dale, with clatter of spur, and glitter of steel ; past Bromley and its common, bright with the golden flower of the bonny broom (whence its name), not blooming here and there, but spreading away on either side, a vast expanse of living gold, that most festive of colours in bright sunlight, a deep glowing yellow! Blue sky and rolling cloud above, and another field of cloth of gold below! Henry, doubtless, was not unobservant, for the broom was the badge of the Plantagenets, who wore a sprig of its yellow blossom, from which they derived their name, *genêt* being the French term for the broom-plant. A sweet old Scotch song has since sung its praises in the northern half of the kingdom :—

“O the broom, the bonny, bonny broom,
The broom of the Cowden-knowes;
For sure so soft, so sweet a bloom
Elsewhere there never grows,”

but Bromley Common in Henry's time made a braver show. Away past Hayes, leaving Wickham Court, a turreted manor house, built in his father's reign, on the right; away over Keston Common, with rattle of hoof and merrie jest. Remains of Roman villas are lying all around, though hidden to them. A little farther, on the brow of Holwood Hill, are remains of a large and important fortification called “Cæsar's Camp,” which marks the site of the ancient Noviomagus, a Brito-Roman town in the territories of the Regni. Of oblong form, with triple dykes and trenches, it occupied nearly 100 acres. The Roman Watling Street, after crossing Blackheath, passed to this town of Noviomagus, and thence turned northward to London. Dark Cudham Woods soon come into view; wild and solitary even now, though scarce twenty miles from town, and beyond, on the left, is the famous landmark of Knockholt Beeches, the church of Knockholt dating from Henry III. The cavalcade keeps well to the right, and, after the summit of the great chalk ridge is gained, descends the steep to Westerham, a large village lying at the foot of the chalk hills. The prospect is grand, but is only a prelude to that to come when Crockham Hill is won. Descending the hill to-day, there are many later objects worth notice. The beautiful vale of Holmesdale,

"Never conquered, never shall,"

stretches away to Riverhead on the left, embosoming old mansions in surrounding trees. Many of them are inseparably associated with our annals. In the old gabled house just showing above the trees close to the church, on a gentle rise at the bottom of the hill, General Wolfe, the conqueror of Quebec, first saw the light, January 2, 1727. The chamber is little altered; there is the carved fireplace, low ceiling, and quaint panelling—objects that grew first familiar to eyes which closed on the victorious heights of Abraham. A short distance farther down the vale stands "Brasted Park," the retreat in which the late Emperor Napoleon spent some years of exile.

After a short halt, Westerham is left slumbering in the noon-day sun beside the pretty river Darent. A mile or two of ascent will bring the cavalcade to Kent Hatch, on the top of Crockham Hill, from whence is a sight to make any monarch proud of his realm. But the way is sultry, and the air flushed and hot, after the long hours that the bright sun has been pouring down his holiday rays, and the horses fall into a quick ambling step that seldom breaks again into more flowing paces. The noise of the south-west breeze, surging among the trees like the sound of the distant sea breaking on a sandy shore, which has accompanied them so far, now dies away. There is no need to remember that it is nuptial June,

"The time of passion and the rose."

All at once the last lift of the hill reveals an expanse of rich country spread out before them,—the beautiful Weald of Kent; of old, the great Andredes-weald, or forest of the Weald. It is a prospect to bring all the cortège to a halt. The descent is abrupt, and you stand as at the edge of a plateau. The view is uninterrupted; turn right or left, right away to the line of the horizon, one looks down upon a vast panorama extending over the three counties of Kent, Surrey, and Sussex. Straight before them stands the old tower of Hever Church, and just below the castle glasses itself in the moat. For the remainder of the way the goal is in sight. Anne will watch from the upper gable windows, and Henry will wind his bugle-horn. Another gallop across the level country, and when next the rein is drawn it is at the portcullised gate. Henry strides into the court-yard, Anne is in her lover's arms; while the Royal Standard shakes out its heavy folds above the little tower of Hever.





PENSHURST PLACE.

FIVE miles from Hever Castle stands the great Kentish shrine of Penshurst, the home of the Sidneys. Penshurst, however, was an antique when it came into the possession of the Sidneys, even as they were then an ancient race, dating from 1154, when the first Sir William Sidney came over from Anjou, a knight in the train of Henry II., on the death of Stephen. Thus their English pedigree ran in a parallel line with that of the Plantagenets : that famous dynasty succeeding the Anglo-Norman kings.

In feudal times a fortified house occupied the present site, and existed before the coming of William the Conqueror. For two centuries afterwards, the Penchesters tenaciously passed it on from father to son, until the time of Edward I., when Sir Stephen de Penchester, also Constable of Dover, and Warden of the Cinque Ports (offices frequently held by the lords of Penshurst), failed in the matter of male issue, and after some divisions between his two daughters, the husband of one of them holding the estate for a short time, it

passed away from the family for ever, and the name of Penchester is heard no more. The effigy of the last of his race, Sir Stephen de Penchester, rests to-day on the pavement of the Sidney chapel in the church just by.

In the records of many of these ancient halls, we frequently find, at some time or other, a wealthy Lord Mayor of London coming into possession. It was so at Hever, at Ightham Mote, and also here at Penshurst.

Sir John de Pulteney—the same who founded the Church of St. Laurence Pountney, in Laurence Pountney Lane—was no ignoble successor; his goodness and benevolence kept pace with his great wealth and large possessions, and to him is ascribed the greater part of the mansion as it now stands. The usual licence to “crenellate,” or fortify, was granted to Sir John by the Crown, so that from the state records the date can be ascertained with perfect exactitude; and Mr. J. H. Parker, the learned archæologist, to whom we all owe fealty, has assigned for us the exact rank it holds amongst the ancient baronial mansions of England. “We have in Penshurst a nearly perfect example of the house of a wealthy gentleman of the time of Edward III., in the year of our Lord 1341, and it is most valuable to us for illustrating the manners and customs of that period.” The great hall, the most important feature of the original house, is almost unaltered, with its very fine open timber roof, the mouldings of which are very good decorative work, agreeing perfectly with the time of Edward III. Such a timber roof and such



mouldings are not to be found anywhere out of England. The fine windows of the hall, with their beautiful Kentish tracery, are peculiarly English.

Standing on the hillside near Redleaf, overlooking the park, the afternoon sun lightens up the dark woods beyond, and falls strongly on the lofty roof and buttresses of the great hall, ruling a clear, sharply defined shadow across the quadrangle. How short a space in Time seems that allotted to man, and how ephemeral are our own shadows when we remember those grey walls have cast the same deep shade across the self-same space day after day uninterruptedly since before the Black Prince won his spurs at Crecy, or took captive the French king at Poitiers, and before the chief of English orders of knighthood was founded !

Descending the slope towards the vast pile, with its handsome Tudor gateway tower built by Sir Henry Sidney, temp. Edward VI., we “tread the groves of Arcady.” There stands *Sidney's Oak*, certainly planted before his birth, but may have often sheltered him, which is better. There is *Saccharissa's Walk*, and the lofty beeches commemorated by Waller.

“Ye lofty beeches ! tell this matchless dame,
That, if together ye fed all one flame,
It could not equalize the hundreth part
Of what her eyes have kindled in my heart.”

Near them stands the heronry, no longer such as regards the herons, they having migrated to Parham, which is therefore now one of the very few remaining English heronries.

This heronry has its history. Early in the reign of James I. the ancestral birds were brought to Penshurst by Lord Leicester Stewart from Cirty Castle in Wales. There they flourished for more than two centuries, and founded a colony. With great caution a visitor might perhaps invade the colony without disturbing it, and hear the indescribable half-croaking, half-hissing sound made by the young herons while fed, but the slightest noise, even the snapping of a stick, is sufficient to send off the parent birds at once. From Penshurst they migrated to Michel Grove, near Arundel, early in the present century, but, being disturbed by the Duke of Norfolk's felling one or two trees in the heronry, the birds at once commenced another migration to the Parham Woods, where, in the course of three seasons, they formed a permanent home in the very centre of a thick wood of pine and spruce fir. The views from the higher slopes of the park are the finest, being both extensive and beautiful, and the undulating country is richly wooded. Some of the oaks are of large dimensions and noble form. Hasted tells of one cut down in 1770 that contained 21 tons, or 840 cubic feet of timber; but altogether the trees will not bear comparison with those of Knole.

Passing through the first court-yard you enter the grand old fourteenth century hall. The mere sight of this hall will better help to realize the life of the olden time than many pages of description. It was not only the chief room on occasions of state and ceremony, but the ordinary refec-



tory wherein the head of the family and perhaps a hundred retainers or more, besides guests, assembled daily at the dinner hour. The long narrow tables to be occupied on one side only, according to mediæval custom, are still there. There is the raised dais at the upper end, where the high table stood for the lord of the house and his most honoured guests. At one end is the door to the staircase of the solar chamber, used as the withdrawing-room for the ladies after dinner, and behind the dais, from the upper room or the lord's chamber, was a look-out into the hall as a check to any too boisterous proceedings after he and his family and guests had retired, or to see that all were assembled before descending with his family in due order of precedence into the hall. At the opposite or lower end stands the music gallery, supported by a carved wooden screen of later date. Under this stood the concealed passage called the Screens, forming a lavatory for washing hands before dinner. Right in the centre of the hall stands the hearth or reredos, with its andiron :—two upright standards supporting a long cross-bar, against which on either side are piled huge logs of wood for burning. The fire lighted, the draught from all sides caused the smoke to ascend straight up to the lofty roof, sixty feet in height, where it was caught in the louvre and dispersed in any direction the wind might chance to blow. The ribs of the fine oak roof and upper walls are darkened with the wood smoke of centuries of yule logs. Looking upward at its great height, it is easy to see that there could have been no discomfort in

such a custom, and the blazing logs must have imparted a feeling of cheerfulness, and shed bright light on every side in a way that nothing else could have done.

On the walls around hang ancient weapons ; old armour ; Sir Philip Sidney's two-handed sword, and the curious steel helmet he wore at Zutphen. If these walls had memories, what unrecorded history in personal experience and anecdote we might learn, for round the blazing logs of the central hearth generations of Englishmen have stretched their steel-clad limbs and fought their battles o'er again. The Black Prince and his wife, "The Fair Maid of Kent," were doubtless not unfamiliar with this Kentish home. The hall is older than Chevy Chase, or Agincourt, or the Wars of the Roses, and Zutphen and the Armada-time were comparatively modern events. Retainers were more identified with their masters and their localities then, and the ties were stronger. Sons of the surrounding tenantry longed for nothing better than "to follow to the field some warlike lord," and years after gathered round the ancient hearth as of right. No such firesides for a winter's tale as these ! Shakespeare meant such a one when Richard II. parting with his faithful queen bids her,

" In winter's tedious nights, sit by the fire
With good old folks ; and let them tell thee tales
Of woeful ages, long ago betide ;
And, ere thou bid good night, to quit their grief,
Tell thou the lamentable fall of me,
And send the hearers weeping to their beds."

Christmas was celebrated in the old hall with great energy in those days. Banners waved overhead, standards decked the walls, and the bright holly and mistletoe were everywhere. On Christmas Eve the Lord of Misrule took possession, followed by the great Yule-log—large enough to burn all through the Christmas-day and beyond—dragged in by a score of foresters and lighted on the central hearth with certain ceremony by the steward, amidst a flourish of trumpets and Kentish fire. The wassail-bowl goes round, the health of the lord of Penshurst is drunk amidst deafening shouts, and *Merrie Christmas* really begins. Misrule is host, and passes from table to table, active in promulgating his time-honoured admonition, “Drink and be merry.” My lord’s fool with cap and bells is there, and soon my lord and lady, children and guests, take their seats in the dais, and the musicians appear in the gallery, for the mummers are coming.

It forms no part of our purpose to describe how Christmas was kept in such halls as this in the olden time. It would be easy to fill a volume with such an attractive subject. Briefly, the mummers having forced an entrance, the chief, *Old Christmas*, all in snowy white, wearing a robe of sheepskins, with flowing locks and beard of the same white colour, and coronet of holly, advances to the blazing fire and tells the purpose of his coming. Ben Jonson has preserved his speech delivered oratorically.

“Why, Gentlemen, do you know what you do, eh? Would you keep me out? Christmas, old Christmas, Christmas of Kent, and Captain Christmas?

Pray you, let me be brought before my Lord Misrule, I'll not be answered else: 'tis merry in the hall when beards wag all: I ha' seen the time when you'd ha' wished for me, for a merry Christmas; and now you ha' me they would not let me in: I must come another time! a good jest, as if I could come more than once a year. Why, I'm no dangerous person, and so I told my friends o' the gate. I'm old Christmas still, and, though I come from the Pope's Head, as good a Protestant as any i' the parish. The truth is I ha' brought a masque here, out o' the country, o' my own making; and do present it by a set of my sons, that comes out of the lanes of Kent, good dancing boys all. Bones o' bread, his lordship! Son Rowland, son Clym, be ready there in a trice."

The mummers now commence their revels: a motley crew, the principal characters representing Robin Hood and his Merry Men, Friar Tuck and Maid Marian, St. George, etc., while the crowd is attired in the most grotesque and bizarre fashion, and the gayest colours obtainable. The "hobby-horse" figures largely, and ambles and trots, makes "Canterbury paces," or kicks out right and left in the most approved fashion. Next in favour is the dragon ridden by his master Snap; and so the revel goes on. It is an English Carnival held within doors. Finally, amid the clamour of sackbuts, trumpets and kettle-drums, the whole troop march in procession three or four times round the hall in front of the dais, and their part in the programme is over.

Later in the evening the noisy clamour is spontaneously hushed, and a mysteriously profound silence prevails throughout the hall. The grotesque mummers form little knots, and the many-coloured masquers fall into picturesque groups. The wassail-bowl is forgotten, the hobby-horse forgets to prance, and the green dragon rests motionless on the flags beside St.

George. On the dais the guests cease to speak but in whispers, the ladies are motionless, and the jester poses himself behind his master's chair in an attitude of studied solemnity, while all eyes—we see not why—are directed to the carved oak screen of the minstrels' gallery. In a little time, from behind its dark shelter a sweet treble voice sends up a single strain of clear bird-like melody. It rises in pure harmonious tones, gathering strength as it soars up to the dim cathedral-like roof, and dies away as though it had passed the golden gate! Now two or three similar voices take up the strain, so impressive in its touching simplicity, and swell the notes of praise, for praise it is, sacred to the season, though but a carol embodying the glad tidings that an angel has sung:—

“This night shall be born
Our heavenly King!

“He neither shall be born
In housen nor in hall,
Nor in the place of Paradise,
But in an ox's stall,” &c.

There was nothing incongruous in this mingling of mirth with devotion, and our ancestors were not troubled with modern scepticism.

At midnight all gathered and sang in full choir that grand old English carol,

“God rest you, merry gentlemen.”

Christmas morning found the yule log still burning on the

hearth, its brightness somewhat paled by the daylight streaming in through the tall stained-glass windows. At the old early dinner hour, the tables ranged up and down the body of the hall are all filled, and the Lord of Penshurst takes his place in the centre of the chief table on the dais, surrounded by his family and guests. To an accompaniment of music, the first course is brought in; the principal dish, the boar's head, resting on a silver support, decorated with rosemary, and a lemon in its mouth, is borne by the head steward, followed by other servants, each bearing a dish in its proper order of precedence. The carol chanted in every hall in England on this day bursts forth

“Caput apri defero
Reddens laudes Domino.
The Boar's head in hand bring I,
With garlands gay and rosemary;
I pray you all sing merrily
Qui estis in convivio.”

Washington Irving has described “The Christmas Dinner” at length; from the entrance of the boar's head until the tables are turned to the wall for the dancing:—“the damsels' delight.” The lord opens the brawls with some fair guest, who may be either a distinguished person, or the daughter of one of his tenantry. The first stately dance was succeeded by gayer and livelier ones as the evening wore on, or as Selden describes it—“First you have the grave measures, then the corrantoes and the galliards, and this is kept up with ceremony;





at length to French-more, and the cushion-dance, and then all the company dances—lord and groom, lady and kitchen-maid, no distinction.”

“ England was merry England when
Old Christmas brought his sports again.
’Twas Christmas broach’d the mightiest ale ;
’Twas Christmas told the merriest tale.”

Sir John de Pulteney’s successors left Penshurst much as they found it, save one—Sir John Devereux—who added a large wing to the house in the time of Richard II. The last of them—Sir John de Clere, of St. Clere, Ightham—sold Penshurst Place to the great Duke of Bedford, son of Henry IV., and Regent during the long minority of Henry VI. He was one of the bravest and best men of his age, and his younger brother, who succeeded him in the possession of Penshurst, is the “good Duke Humphrey” of Shakspeare.

There is little need to trace the incessant changes that followed, or to enumerate possessors who left no mark upon the place. For us, its real history begins with the Sidneys.

The “great Earl,” father of Anne Boleyn’s mother, Lady Elizabeth Howard, whose connection with Hever has been already indicated, had, for a lieutenant at Flodden, an experienced veteran,—one of the knights of the Field of the Cloth of Gold—Sir William Sidney, who commanded the right wing of the victorious army. For this and subsequent services, Penshurst was bestowed upon him by the young Edward VI. From the time of the birth of Henry VIII.’s welcome prince-

ling, until his early death, the motherless boy became almost entirely the property of the Sidneys. Sir William Sidney was his chamberlain, steward, and tutor; Lady Sidney—the heiress of Ightham Mote—his governess; and a sister his only nurse. Henry Sidney, their only son, born in the *Hever* days of Anne Boleyn and Henry VIII. (1529), became his henchman at eight years of age, and his dearest and closest companion throughout his brief career, and it was in Henry Sidney's arms that the young king expired in his sixteenth year, at Greenwich, July 7, 1553. Henry Sidney was then twenty-four years old, and had recently married the Lady Mary Dudley, eldest daughter of the Duke of Northumberland. Sir William, the soldier of Flodden, died a few months later, and *Sir* Henry Sidney retired to the seclusion of Penshurst. Here he remained with his young wife, Lady Mary, and took no part in the ambitious plans of his father-in-law, the Duke of Northumberland, for placing Lady Jane Grey upon the throne. The catastrophe and ruin that ill-starred project brought upon all concerned are matters of history. Sidney, by his prudence and judgment, escaped all suspicion of complicity in this tragic episode. The axe then did its work. Eighteen years had elapsed since the moated house of Hever—their next neighbour—had paid its sanguinary tribute to the executioner's block on Tower Hill, yet the bright steel had not been allowed to rust in the interim. Thomas Cromwell, Catherine Howard, the poet Surrey, had each in turn pillowed their heads upon it, and now at Penshurst there was mourning for a father, a

brother, a sister-in-law, and a second brother—John Dudley—who had been respited because death claimed him. He went straight from the Tower to his sister's at Penshurst, where, on the third day after his release, all earthly claims were satisfied.

So, in endless procession, the incomprehensible drama of human life moves slowly, with measured tread, across the stage of Time. The mass for the dead is closely followed by the gay fête, the bright song, the light jest, and loud vivas of the quick; the majestic tones of the *Dies iræ* scarce die away in the distance ere the shrill sound of the ear-piercing fife and the roll of the drum break in; as the hand that closes down one page by the same movement reveals the next. A month later, November 29th, 1554, in this house of dolour at Penshurst was born one whose name came to be cherished throughout the land as the type of all that was best and noblest in the English race—Sir Philip Sidney.

During the first few years of his young life, the Romish Church burned the incense it so dearly loved throughout this pleasant land. The blazing faggot and the smoke of martyr fires ascended from many a quiet market-place, and beclouded the gabled houses and pale-blue sky-dome of Sidney's England. The axe—short, sharp, and painless—suited not the epicurean tastes of a Papal power. The burnt-incense of slowly-roasting flesh, and charring bone, was as his native air to the Spanish master of the ceremonies, Mary's husband, bred in the traditions of the Inquisition :—a sweet-smelling savour, a goodly sacrifice of burnt offerings made in God's own image,

very precious and acceptable in His sight, and worthy to be looked down upon by Christ and His angels from a throne of grace! Did not the lowly Nazarene teach the sweet uses of rack and thumbscrew, and burnt sacrifice, rather than "the sacrifice of a broken spirit and contrite heart?" Or did the New Testament, as expounded by an infallible priesthood, teach these things? Pile high the faggots then—add newborn children, and maidens pure, with heretic prayers upon their lips, prayers impiously ignoring the Virgin's name—high, and higher, ever higher,

"Until flame and life expire."

An average of seventy-one, men, women, and children, yearly throughout Mary's reign. So stands the record. And to-day it is the fashion for people with æsthetic proclivities to coquet with a Church whose proudest boast is that it is alike unchanged and unchangeable!—to vaguely chatter of "functions," "ritual," and "baldacchini," and "assist" at meek rehearsals of incipient idolatry! Oh, hearts that glowed with a purer light within! the white-robed angels crowned with asphodel were with you by the fires unseen, as they are with every soul exhaled in cruelty and wrong, whatever form their celestial presence may assume to the varying faith of men.

The wind-sprent ashes of those fires have never yet been laid. Wafted by the breath of history down the path of centuries, they have inspired some of the noblest contributions

to our national literature and song. One hundred years later, Milton sounded his grandest trumpet-tones in the matchless sonnet,

“Avenge, O Lord, thy slaughtered saints, whose bones
Lie scattered on the Alpine mountains cold,
Even those who kept thy truths so pure of old.”

and the memory of the earlier persecutions may be traced in many of the best lyrics of later poets.

Sad memories yet lingered within the home circle, and from without the boy often heard earnest, saddened talk, brought by relation or guest, of the blight that had fallen on the land. Fourteen years hence, when all this had passed away, Philip Sidney was to see a sight in Paris on the Eve of St. Bartholomew that would for ever burn deeply into his mind an undying hatred of the Church of Rome.

But now, in company with little Mary, one year younger, and equally gifted, later to become

“the subject of all verse,
Sidney’s sister, Pembroke’s mother,”

he rambles in the woods of Penshurst and the valley of the Medway, amidst scenes afterwards reproduced in the “*Arcadia*” for his sister’s gratification at Wilton. Penshurst stood for Laconia, and Kalander’s abode was partly Sidney’s ideal of a house, and partly a description of their own home. Around them were the “hills which garnished their proud heights with stately trees; humble vallies whose base estate seemed comforted with the refreshing of silver rivers; meadowes

enamelled with all sorts of eie-pleasing flowers ; thickets which, being lined with most pleasant shade, were witnessed so too by the cheerfull disposition of many well-tuned birds ; each pasture stored with sheep feeding with sober security, while the pretty lambs, with bleating oratory, craved the dam's comfort ; here a shepherd's boy piping as though he should never be old ; there a young shepherdess knitting and withal singing, and it seemed that her voice comforted her hands to work, and her hands kept time to her voice-music."

These were but the every-day sights and sounds that peopled the vision of the two bright children there growing up together, and these walls we look upon to-day must have often rung with the happy laughter of their childish voices. When old enough, he was sent to Shrewsbury, and from that famous school he passed in due course to Oxford, having already, though a boy in years, won great distinction.

Sir Henry Sidney, his father, was as a public servant remorselessly worked by Queen Elizabeth, and worse paid. From the time of her accession until his death, a period of some thirty years, he was scarcely ever out of harness. The long story of his labours and trials, as Lord Deputy of Ireland, and Lord President of Wales, and the Queen's meanness and injustice towards one of the noblest, purest, and most devoted adherents sovereign ever had, seem almost incredible, and place certain phases of her character in an unpleasant light that nothing can wholly remove. It is clear that those who administered to her vanity carried off all the

rewards she had to bestow, and importunate courtiers secured beforehand that which conscientious and laborious workers like Sidney should have had. Elizabeth never stayed to be just before being generous. Kept to the oar of state, Ireland and Ludlow had all Sir Henry Sidney's manhood, and throughout his married life he saw but little of Penshurst. His wife lost all her beauty from small-pox taken while nursing the Queen ; constantly put to extraordinary expenses and losses, he was too high-minded to enrich himself by what were then scarcely thought unlawful means, and Elizabeth had the unutterable meanness, while heaping favours on her favourites, to allow him to impoverish his estate and his children's inheritance in her service ! The sunshine of his life consisted in the knowledge of the unrivalled excellence of his children, Philip Sidney and his sister Mary, afterwards Countess of Pembroke. Amongst the Queen's splendid retinue many were there, rich in beauty, wealth, and chivalrous grace and accomplishments ; but taking them for all in all, alike in physical beauty and rarest mental gifts, there were none who could stand before these two brightest gems of Elizabeth's Court.

At one period Queen Elizabeth appears to have felt some misgivings that she was not treating Sir Henry Sidney as his great ability and services deserved, and curiously enough she proposed bestowing a peerage upon her impoverished and faithful servant. An explosive shell could not have produced greater consternation and dismay in the camp of the Sidneys.

In their sore perplexity Lady Mary (May 2nd, 1572) wrote a letter to Lord Burleigh¹ on behalf of her husband, pathetic in its earnest entreaty that such a calamity might be averted, pointing out how impossible in their "ruinated state" it would be to maintain a higher title than they now possessed, and beseeching his aid in saving them from incurring her Majesty's displeasure by refusing it. Lady Mary's diplomacy was successful, and no more was heard of the unwelcome peerage.

Philip was now in his eighteenth year, and that foreign travel thought necessary for the completion of the education of a gentleman was resolved on. At the end of May, 1572, he left London in the train of the English Ambassador Extraordinary to the French Court, with reference to the projected marriage of Elizabeth and the Duke of Alençon. Philip remained in Paris three months, seeing everything that could be seen, mingling in its gaieties and brilliant Court festivals, making fast friends; closest and firmest of all, the resident Ambassador Walsingham, whose son-in-law he afterwards became. But this gay life in Paris was destined to have a painful and sudden ending. Beneath the surface of all its glittering pageantry, the most consummate treachery was busy planning the darkest crime that ever stained the annals of a civilized nation. A wicked king, together with a yet more wily and wicked mother, Catherine De' Medici, were

¹ State Paper Office MSS. Domestic Correspondence, Elizabeth.

about to perpetrate the Massacre of the Eve of St. Bartholomew. Philip Sidney witnessed it from the windows of the English Embassy, where with Walsingham, though a Protestant, he was safe. For seven days the slaughter went on, and blood flowed in the streets like rain. By the lowest estimates five thousand Protestants were murdered in Paris, and one hundred thousand in the provinces. His memory was ever after peopled with cruel sights that he never forgot during that short career which closed at thirty-two. Men, women, and children rushing out of their homes to be instantly slaughtered; the cowardly French monarch firing from a window his arquebus as at a *battuc*, as fast as it could be loaded, shouting, "Kill! kill;" the wounded Huguenot, Admiral Coligny, murdered in his bed, and his quivering body tossed out of the window to be kicked by the Duke of Guise, and the thousand horrible sights of that cruel massacre. When all was finished, the Pope held a special thanksgiving-service at St. Peter's, to render up thanks to Almighty God for the successful accomplishment of the holy work!

Sidney had seen enough of Paris. As soon as passports could be procured, he passed on to Frankfort, by way of Lorraine and Strasbourg.

At Frankfort he made the acquaintance of a man who was destined to exercise an influence upon the whole of his after career—Hubert Languet. Regretfully we must pass over the life of this remarkable man. Formerly a Professor in the University of Padua, the friend of Melancthon, a scholar of

rare ability, and great purity of life and character, he had publicly renounced his connection with the Church of Rome, and his matured political as well as scholarly experience made the warm friendship soon established between them of the greatest importance to Philip Sidney. It ultimately became the one greatest and closest friendship of his life, and lasted until death interposed.

Sidney everywhere acknowledges his indebtedness :—

“ The song I sang old Languet had me taught—
Languet the shepherd, best swift Ister knew,
For clerkly reed, and hating what is naught,
For faithful heart, clean hands, and mouth as true.
With his sweet skill my skilless youth he drew
To have a feeling taste of Him that sits
Beyond the heaven, *far more beyond our wits.*”

In the summer of 1573, Sidney went on to Vienna with Languet. In November they parted in tears, Philip Sidney leaving for Venice. Those were the olden days of travel. In company with three other young Englishmen, Sidney left Vienna on horseback fully equipped as for a long journey : a journey full of pleasant surprises, adventures, strange halting-places, and almost unknown ways ; a journey not to be accomplished without toil, “but in which that toil was rewarded, partly by the power of deliberate survey of the countries through which the journey lay, and partly by the happiness of the evening hours, when, from the top of the last hill he had surmounted, the traveller beheld the quiet village where he was to rest, scattered among the meadows beside its valley

stream ; hours of peaceful and thoughtful pleasure, for which the rush of the arrival in the railway station is perhaps not always, or to all men, an equivalent."

In this wise, Sidney and his companions at length drew near to Venice, threading the banks of the Brenta, and passed Mestre, until the domes of the sea-girt city broke upon their longing gaze. That approach to Venice, and the sight that met the traveller as his gondola shot into the open lagoon from Mestre, is one no longer possible to realize save in the pictures of Turner, or the pages of the author of "*The Stones of Venice*." Sidney saw it at its best, when, on one side, no long railway bridge blotted out half the horizon :—

"The path lies o'er the sea,
Invisible, and from the land they went,
As to a floating city."

The vast sheet of water stretched away in leagues of rippling lustre to the north and south. "The salt breeze, the white moaning sea-birds, the masses of black seaweed, all proclaimed it to be indeed the ocean on whose bosom the great city rested so calmly ; not such blue, soft, lake-like ocean as bathes the Neapolitan promontories, or sleeps beneath the marble rocks of Genoa ; but a sea with the bleak power of those northern waves, yet subdued into a strange spacious rest, and changed from its angry pallor into a field of burnished gold, as the sun declined behind the belfry tower of the lonely island church fitly named '*St. George of the Seaweed*.'"

Venice was to all appearance in the height of her glory. Ludovico Mocenigo was then Doge, and the great victory over the Turks at Lepanto marks the period distinctly. The wealth, magnificence, and at the same time over-luxuriousness spread around, under an appearance of renewed vigour of national life and progress, were but as the hectic flush already symptomatic of coming decay. A scene at once so beautiful and so strange—quays crowded with Eastern merchandize and Eastern costumes, sumptuous palaces, rich in associations with a picturesque past all flushed with the opal lights of poetry and romance—could scarcely be imagined, as that which met Philip Sidney's gaze on every side. Beside the great palaces of the Grand Canal, all those that now lie hidden in remote, half-deserted canals, their grass-grown courts, silent and sad, with broken pavement, choked, decaying fountain and mutilated statue, were then full of rich and prosperous Venetians.

It must be remembered that 1574—the year of Sidney's sojourn in the sea-girt city of the lagoons—was also the year when Venice made the entertainment of Henry III. of France, on his return from Poland, the occasion of an extraordinary display of splendour, a whole week being given up to the costliest banquets, magnificent processions and displays, terminated by a superb festival at the Doge's Palace, in which the astonished and enchanted monarch of France saw the fairest and most beautiful women of Venice pass slowly before him in all the pride of loveliness. Mark Anthony—the subject

of Yriarte's recent work, "La Vie d'un Patricien de Venise au Seizième Siècle,"—specially attached to the French king, while he was the guest of the Republic, figured prominently in these proceedings. The display of naval power also then made should be remembered now, when one essays to wander through the dreary old dockyard, and dream of the departed glory of the Queen of the Adriatic.

Paolo Veronese was at the zenith of his fame. Titian, though still painting, was ninety-seven years of age. Tintoret—Il furioso Tintoretto—was growing old, past sixty, and had, moreover, expended his earlier fire on the walls of the Scuola San Rocco, and in acres of other pictorial compositions scattered among the numberless churches and palazzos of the Sea-Cybele. They must have been fresh and bright then, and worth gliding in a gondola down to the little landing steps by the Church of the Frari to see. To-day, innocently trusting themselves to a *valet-de-place*, not one visitor in a hundred sees them at the only hour of the day in which they can be at all seen, and even then imperfectly.

Thus Veronese's star was in the ascendant. Just forty years of age, he was, however, to die before Tintoretto. His "Marriage in Cana" was painted: that festive scene for which Venice alone could have furnished the splendid accessories, the rich fabrics, the gold and silver vessels, the picturesque forms and costumes, and the brilliant sunlight. And to Veronese Philip Sidney sat for his portrait. Those sittings would alone make a picture—the young Elizabethan

Englishman from Penshurst, and the great sixteenth-century painter, sitting in the old Venetian palazzo washed by the Adriatic waves. Past the open windows gondolas glide by, bearing their burthen of beauty, and also of rank and learning, for Venice then attracted distinguished men from all countries. Within, we may be sure there was plenty to engage Sidney's attention, for Veronese, though frugal in his own habits, loved to surround himself with the costliest treasures in objects of *vertu*, splendid plate, and richest vestment that his purse could buy.

At the Servite Convent hard by, a young man of the same age as Sidney—the monk Peter Sarpi—was gathering vast stores of knowledge from every available source, particularly from the *forestieri* who visited Venice. By and by he was to fill the world with astonishment by waging victorious battle for Venice against Pope Paul the Fifth and all the priestly pomp of Rome. Tasso, the favourite poet of the Venetians, was busy writing his "Jerusalem Delivered." For two centuries after, Adria's gondoliers sang no other songs than the strophes of this immortal epic. While residing in Venice, Sidney visited the famous University at Padua, remaining six weeks in that city. After further travel, he returned to England on the last day of May, 1575, having been absent just three years.

Twenty years had elapsed since the downfall of his mother's family, the Dudleys, and the two survivors of that catastrophe, her brothers, Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester, and Ambrose, Earl of Warwick, had long since lived down



its immediate effects. Robert had become the Queen's chief favourite, and had grown rich and powerful, though with many dark stories clinging about him, to one of which at least Sir Walter Scott, in his novel "*Kenilworth*," has given fresh life. His handsome person and gallant bearing, and the splendour of his mode of life made him one of the most conspicuous figures in all Elizabeth's Court. What manner of man he appeared at this time may perhaps be best seen in the portrait by Sir A. More, in Sir Richard Wallace's collection. Leicester was proud of his nephew. He saw his great promise, and, though he himself possessed no sufficient standard by which to gauge the mental stature, and still less the moral height of one like Sidney, he saw that he possessed a handsome person, courtly grace and accomplishments, and now, on his arrival with all the *éclat* of foreign travel, he carried him off to Kenilworth, where there were to be extraordinary doings in honour of Queen Elizabeth's visit.

The Royal State entertainment given by Leicester to Queen Elizabeth at Kenilworth has been so often described, that we forbear. There is no doubt the spectacles and festivities provided were of such an elaborate character, and on such a magnificent scale as to be wholly unrivalled. No one in these days would venture to entertain a queen who brought with her a retinue of thirty-one barons, besides all her ladies of the Court and four hundred servants. We may mention, among a crowd of other guests, Thomas Sackville, Baron Buckhurst and lord of Knole; Sir Francis Knollys, and

his daughter the Countess of Essex—like Sackville, related through Anne Boleyn to the Queen; Mr. Secretary Walsingham, Sir Henry Sidney, and Lady Mary, and other kinsmen of the host.

These gay revels lasted seventeen days, and the fame of such grand doings filled all the country round. There is one waif and stray of history unrecorded by any chronicler. A precocious village lad of eleven summers lived close by, who, we may be sure, missed no opportunity of seeing all that could be seen of these lordly joustings and fanciful devices. The cavalcades that issued from the gate-house for the splendid hunting excursions planned by Leicester, the beauty of the Court ladies, the picturesque magnificence of the costumes, the gorgeous trappings of the horses, and the crowds of mounted retainers, trumpeters, etc., opened out to the imaginative vision of William Shakspeare a new world, and peopled the sweet sylvan pictures, the greenwood shades, and flowery meads of his boyhood's home with the highest existing types of English beauty and English chivalry. The Kenilworth show, incidentally, performed one important purpose never dreamed of by its projector!

Sidney afterwards accompanied the Queen on her return to Chartley Castle, the seat of the Earl of Essex, and there he first saw Penelope Devereux, the *Stella* of Sidney's famous sonnets. To this thwarted attachment we owe those dainty sonnets which, like the piping shepherd-boy of his "Arcadia," "shall never be old."

“Come, sleep, O sleep, the certain knot of peace,
The baiting place of wit, the balm of woe,
The poor man’s wealth, the prisoner’s release,
The indifferent judge between the high and low ;
With shield of proof shield me from out the prease ¹
Of those fierce darts despair at me doth throw ;
Oh make in me those civil wars to cease :
I will good tribute pay, if thou do so.
Take thou of me sweet pillows, sweetest bed ;
A chamber deaf to noise, and blind to light ;
A rosy garland, and a weary head.
And if these things, as being thine by right,
Move not thy heavy grace, thou shalt in me,
Livelier than elsewhere, Stella’s image see.”

Sidney became a great favourite of the Earl of Essex, who valued him highly, and had the Earl lived, there would have been no barrier to the union of Sidney with his daughter, Penelope. But his uncle Leicester had become enamoured of her mother, Lady Essex, and the Earl’s subsequent death gave rise to another of those dark stories which attached themselves to Leicester’s fame. Certainly the Earl of Leicester became the husband of the widowed Lady Essex.

Time rolled on, Sidney after his return from Ireland, where he had been to visit his father, was sent by the Queen to Germany on the death of the Emperor Maximilian, as her representative. The mission was a delicate one, and Sidney acquitted himself with considerable ability. Between himself and the Prince of Orange a strong attachment sprang up, and Sidney stood as godfather to the child of William the Silent.

¹ Press.

After his return from Germany, his sister Mary was married to the Earl of Pembroke—together a happy union.

We next find him manfully defending his father's administration in Ireland. There was always a disposition to find fault with Sir Henry Sidney's management of Irish affairs, without any sufficient ground; but he had in Philip an able and eloquent defender.

The life of the Court was altogether insufficient to satisfy a nature like Sidney's. He grew weary of life, and an insatiable longing for real work took possession of him. His correspondence with Languet is full of this noble discontent, this passionate desire to be doing some good in the world. He vents it in the pastoral poem, "Dispraise of a Courtly Life"—

"Where, how many creatures be,
So many puff'd in mind I see;
Like to Juno's birds of pride,
Scarce each other can abide."

William the Silent took the opportunity afforded by a passing interview with his friend, Fulke Greville, to send a message to Elizabeth, to say that he craved leave of her freely to utter his knowledge and opinion. "He had had much experience, he had seen various times and things and persons; but he protested that Her Majesty had in Sir Philip Sidney one of the ripest and greatest statesmen that he knew of in all Europe. If Her Majesty would but try the young man, the Prince would stake his own credit on the issue of his

friend's employment about any business, either with the allies, or with the enemies of England."

At this period, 1579, commenced his friendship with Edmund Spenser; and "The Shepherd's Calender" was dedicated to Sidney. This friendship led him to devote himself more heartily to letters than he had ever done, and to seek relief from his purposeless career in literary work and companionship.

Upon the renewal of the project of the French marriage, Sidney strongly resisted it; and having rendered himself obnoxious to the Queen by his opposition, retired from the Court. He shortly after went to his sister at Wilton, where he remained some considerable time in retirement. We owe to this visit much of the best of Sidney's writing. The loss of Court favour which ensued may be esteemed a most fortunate circumstance for posterity.

The noblest influences that fell upon Philip Sidney's life came from his sister, Mary, Countess of Pembroke. The sterner influence of his father's example, and the uncompromising Huguenot training of Languet, had their full share, and kept him unwavering in his strong attachment to the liberal side in that great battle of religious freedom then being contested throughout Europe, and in the defence of whose principles he afterwards sacrificed his life.

In one of the Essays of Elia devoted to Philip Sidney, Charles Lamb warmly defends him from the well-known Horace Walpole sneer, and indignantly refutes the term "a

foolish nobleman in his insolent hostility chose to apply to him ;” and, referring to this period of his career, asserts “ that if the order of time had thrown Sir Philip upon the crisis which preceded the Revolution, there is no reason why he should not have acted the same part in that emergency which has glorified the name of a later Sidney. He did not want for plainness or boldness of spirit. His letter on the French match may testify he could speak his mind freely to princes. The times did not call him to the scaffold.”

He came down to Wilton thoroughly disgusted with Court life and its intrigues, the Queen’s vanity and indiscretion, and yet more, his own fruitless career. Mary was quickly by his side, and by her affectionate tact turned aside this ebullition of anger and disappointment into safe and useful channels.

“ Urania, sister unto Astrophel,
In whose brave mind as in a golden coffer
All heavenly gifts and riches lockéd are.”

So sang Spenser while she lived, and when she died, Ben Jonson wrote the lines graven upon the heart of every Englishman :—

“ Underneath this sable hearse
Lies the subject of all verse,
Sidney’s sister, Pembroke’s mother.
Death ! ere thou hast found another
Learned, fair, and good as she,
Time shall throw a dart at thee.”

This period, thus under the influence of a superior woman, became one of the brightest and happiest in his life.

Work was the panacea! Work, suggested and shared by Mary. This wise creature of twenty-four summers put into practice Mrs. Barrett Browning's later teaching:—

“Get leave to work,
In this world 'tis the best you get at all.
. . . . get work, get work,
Be sure 'tis better than what you work to get.”

The “Arcadia” was commenced at this time, and the translation of the “Psalms of David” was a joint undertaking; and though we have no means of separating the brother's from the sister's work, Mary's undoubtedly in this predominates. It was a work especially to her taste—

“The Lord, the Lord my shepherd is,
And so can never I
Taste misery.
He rests me in green pastures His;
By waters still and sweet
He guides my feet.
“He me revives, leads me the way
Which righteousness doth take.”

Sidney's correspondence with Languet—a matter of considerable importance—was also resumed with much vigour. The brave old Huguenot's letters are yet preserved.

But Sidney was thrall to the fair eyes of the beautiful Penelope Devereux. To this passion we owe the exquisite sonnets addressed to Stella. Charles Lamb has quoted twelve of them, which he affirms to be “the very best of their sort.” “They abound in felicitous phrases, but they are not rich in words, only in vague and unlocalized feelings—the failing too

much of some poetry of the present day—they are full, material, and circumstantiated. Time and place appropriate every one of them. It is not a fever of passion wasting itself upon a thin diet of dainty words, but a transcendent passion pervading and illuminating action, pursuits, studies, feats of arms, the opinions of contemporaries, and his judgment of them. An historical thread runs through them, which almost affixes a date to them ; marks the *when* and *where* they were written.”

We cannot forego the temptation of repeating one of them, and it is one for which the gentle Elia had a special affection. It must have been written, and should be read, after nightfall, in the grounds of Wilton or Penshurst :—

“ With how sad steps, O moon, thou climb’st the skies ;
 How silently ; and with how wan a face !
 What ! may it be, that even in heavenly place
 That busy Archer his sharp arrows tries ?
 Sure, if that long-with-love-acquainted eyes
 Can judge of love, thou feel’st a lover’s case :
 I read it in thy looks ; thy languisht grace
 To me, that feel the like, thy state describes.
 Then, even of fellowship, O moon, tell me,
 Is constant love deem’d there but want of wit ?
 Are beauties there as proud as here they be ?
 Do they above love to be loved, and yet
 Those lovers scorn, whom that love doth possess ?
 Do they call virtue there—ungratefulness ? ”

Sidney’s loss of Court favour undoubtedly led to his union with Penelope Devereux being broken off. According to the intensely worldly notions of her guardian, a man who would

let his principles stand in the way of his advancement was not to be thought of, despite the love between them, and the approbation strongly expressed by the late Earl, her father. A "proper husband" was found for her in the person of Lord Rich, the inheritor of all the wealth, and also the vulgar and brutal disposition of his father, Lord Chancellor Rich. The lady protested even at the altar, and the union, of course, proved a most unhappy one. Philip was furious. In the first wild burst of passion and pain, he threw some share of the blame upon Penelope, and exhaled part of the bitterness he felt in the sonnet commencing, "Rich fools there be," &c.; but when he knew the whole truth, and how much his passion had been reciprocated, a fierce resolve that the outrage should be avenged took possession of him. The world's law should be no law to him, he would love her and seek her more than ever!

It was the old story; gold outweighing the heart's best boon, and one more poet learning in suffering what they teach in song. Sidney saw his Stella mated to a clown. There was agony in the thought of the beautiful girl of eighteen—the touch of whose soft hand and whose sunny smile had been sacred to Philip—becoming the subject of the bought caress, the swelling heart, and the passionless kiss, not for love but duty. To a nobler rival he would have yielded less wrathfully, but for a brute like Rich to have and hold the idol of his imagination as "something better than his dog, something dearer than his horse!" was unendurable. The jingle of the gold

awoke his fiercest anger, and what wonder if he too thought—

“Cursed be the social wants that sin against the strength of youth !
Cursed be the social lies that warp us from the living truth !
Cursed be the gold that gilds the straiten'd forehead of the fool !”

Unfortunately, to-day, gold, almighty gold, is more than ever the object of worship, and by far the larger majority of people belong to that persuasion. What are the treasures of the affections beside the glitter of the diamond tiara, the well-appointed chariot, obsequious lacqueys, and the well-paid deference of the Parisian *costumier* ? Dangerous guides, the affections ! Against them is a host of neat maxims, and—*common sense*, the general term for much worldliness !

Such a passion would have plunged a nature like Leicester's into the darkest crime. In a shallower one, the wound would have cicatrized, and been succeeded by a gray, dull apathy ; but to a nature like Philip Sidney's there could be no such ending. Either it must subdue, or be subdued ; no middle course is possible. The conflict was long and severe. We may be sure, Mary—his equal in intellect, morally, as a woman, doubtless his superior—was there to aid by her wise counsel and sisterly sympathy, and Languet would not be backward. But, chief and best auxiliary of all, Sidney's nature was like the pure, transparent glacier that rejects all foreign substances by some innate repulsive power ; the time may be long, but sooner or later cast to the surface they will be. Love now could be only sin, and to pursue it, deliberate

wrong-doing. For two years we find him leading a comparatively unproductive life. Some of his sonnets mark the stages during which reason and virtue were vanquishing passion and hopeless regret. There was much brave battling with himself before the victory was achieved.

At length, like the débris of the moraine on the pale crystalline surface of the glacier ice, lay Sidney's dead love ; not because unfaithful, but because principle had triumphed over passion, when passion could only lead to the destruction of its object, and became a selfish pursuit of the earth, earthy.

There was more than victory, and he was something more than cured, when he commemorated the termination of the struggle which had lifted him, as all victories over self do, to a higher platform, in the following lines :—

“ Leave me, O love, which reachest but to dust,
And thou my mind, aspire to higher things ;
Grow rich in that which never taketh rust
Whatever fades, but fading pleasure brings.
Draw in thy beams, and humble all thy might
To that sweet yoke, where lasting freedoms be
Which breaks the clouds and opens forth the light
That doth both shine and give us light to see.
Oh, take fast hold ! let that light be thy guide
In this small course which birth draws out to death,
And think how evil becometh him to elude,
Who seeketh heaven and comes of heavenly breath.
Then farewell world, thy uttermost I see ;
Eternal love, maintain thy life in me.”

The “ Arcadia,” that mixture of classical fable and chivalrous romance, with all its beauties and defects, is too large a

subject to be entered upon here. Besides the sonnets scattered through that work, he wrote a hundred and twenty-five others. The "Astrophel and Stella" contains one hundred and eight.

The Italian sonnet had been firmly planted in this country by Surrey thirty years earlier, Wyatt and Surrey having set the fashion of imitating the strains of Petrarch and Ariosto, and Sidney followed in the same path. Both Wyatt and Surrey had associations with "Hever," and between the last-named and Sidney, to whom he was distantly related, there was in some aspects, both of character and career, considerable resemblance.

The "Defence of Poesie" was the production of his maturer years, and is one of the choicest ornaments of Elizabethan literature, as well as the earliest offspring of English criticism. The matter is arranged with consummate skill. Beginning with Homer and Hesiod and others, the author shows how much we owe to poetic teaching, when, for a long time, the philosophers and historians of Greece dared to teach their lessons to the world only under the mask of poetry. Tracing its progress through Greek and Roman times, the middle ages, down to his own time, he goes on to classify and review his subject in detail. Having done this he passes on to the consideration of what rank poetry shall be assigned among the productions of human genius, laying down certain premises, which are quite fair, though not indisputable. The various paths and fields of human learning, and those who pursue them, are reviewed at length. After

describing the astronomer, the astrologer, &c., he singles out the historian and moral philosopher as being specially important,—and philosophy and history were the favourite studies of the earlier part of Sidney's career. The author here indulges in a vein of polished satire while sketching them. The philosophers come first—"Methinks I see them coming towards me with a sullen gravity, as though they could not abide vice by daylight; rudely clothed, for to witness outwardly their contempt of outward things; with books in their hands against glory, whereto they set their names; sophistically speaking against hostility, and angry with any man in whom they see the foul fault of anger." The historian next stands for his portrait, "laden with old mouse-eaten records, authorizing himself for the most part upon other histories, whose greatest authorities are built upon the notable foundation of hearsay; having much ado to accord differing writers, and to pick truth out of partiality; better acquainted with a thousand years ago than with this present age, and yet better knowing how the world goes than how his own wit runs; curious for antiquities and inquisitive of novelties, a wonder to young folk, and a tyrant to table-talk." Passing by theology, as out of the field of discussion, and law, as not a very noble pursuit, seeing that it "doth not endeavour to make men good, but that their evil hurt not others, having no care, so he be a good citizen, how bad a man may be," he proceeds to deduce from this comprehensive survey of the whole range of human learning, and its professors, the triumphant conclusion

that, when all is said and done, the mission of "the poet is the grandest!" It is no idle art the poet brings. God sent His singers on earth :—

"Bravely furnish'd all abroad to fling
The winged shafts of truth,"

and, says Sidney, they of all others can best "lift up the mind from the dungeon of the body to the enjoying of his own divine essence," and "lead and draw us to as high a perfection as our degenerate souls, made worse by their clay-lodgings, can be capable of." There is no teaching like the poets'. Wisdom, and virtue, and truth, embodied in song, will enter in at lowliest doors. The cold philosophy of "wordish description" neither pierces nor possesses the soul, yet "let us but hear old Anchises speaking in the middle of Troy's flames, and see Ulysses in the fulness of Calypso's delights bewail his absence from barren and beggarly Ithaca, and we shall understand what love of country means. Anger, the Stoics say, was a short madness; let but Sophocles bring you Ajax on a stage, killing or whipping sheep and oxen, thinking them the army of Greeks, with their chieftains, Agamemnon and Menelaus; and tell me if you have not a more familiar insight into anger than finding in the schoolman his genus and difference. See whether wisdom and temperance in Ulysses and Diomedes, valour in Achilles, friendship in Nisus and Euryalus, even to an ignorant man, carry not an apparent shining; and, contrarily, the remorse of conscience in Œdipus, the soon repenting pride in Agamemnon, the self-

devouring cruelty in his father Atreus, the violence of ambition in the two Theban brothers, the sour sweetness of revenge in Medea, and to fall lower, Terentian Quattio, and our Chaucer's Pandar, so expressed that we now use their names to signify their trades, and, finally, all virtues, vices, and passions, so in their own natural states laid to the view that we seem not to hear of them, but clearly to see through them."

It is an earlier assertion of the poet's mission, made by one of the greatest singers of our own time, that poets are—

"The only truth tellers left us now by God."

In 1583, Philip Sidney was knighted by the Queen, and a few months after, disregarding all advances made to him on many sides as overtures for a rich and powerful alliance, he married one as poor as himself, the daughter of his old and tried friend Sir Francis Walsingham, a man whose sterling worth and nobility of character stand out in strong relief amidst so much that was false and self-seeking in the court of Elizabeth. Notwithstanding the difference in their age, Sidney and he were one in all their sympathies and lofty aims. Poor Sir Henry Sidney, in the midst of "present biting necessity," wrote from his Irish Presidentship, that he "willingly agreed and joyed in the alliance with all his heart," although he had been offered great sums of money to influence Philip to bestow his hand elsewhere. In fact, a *preux chevalier* like Sir Philip Sidney might have made in the court of Elizabeth almost any alliance he chose.

The remainder of Sidney's career belongs to the history of his country. He was now approaching thirty years of age. From the time of his earliest travel twelve years before, he had—the fruit of much personal observation, intercourse with others, close study, and reflection—arrived at the conclusion that the only way to strike an effectual blow in the cause of civil and religious freedom so dear to him, was by means of the overthrow of Spanish power. This became the great wish of his life, confirmed by further personal experience and observation during subsequent missions in Germany and the Netherlands. The idea of a general Protestant league took possession of him, and he it was who first conceived the plan that the best policy would be to attack Spain on her own soil, and not in the Netherlands where she was more strongly fortified than in any part of her dominions; “to form a general league among free princes, and to undertake this undertaker at home.”

The assassination of William the Silent filled him with dismay. What was there now that Spanish and Romish treachery, by means of those arch-instruments the Jesuits, might not accomplish? His correspondence with Du Plessis Mornay exhibits the intense interest he took in foreign politics, and how clearly he saw the importance of the crisis. The condition of Europe was ominous enough, and it seemed that Spain and the Church of Rome were destined to subjugate and enslave the whole of Europe.

This great subject can be only glanced at in connection with the *Sidneys of Penshurst*.

In the Parliament of 1584-85, Sir Philip Sidney again sat for Kent as county member. His name occurs as sitting on a committee for such minor local matters as the maintenance of Rochester Bridge, the preservation of woods in Kent, and other unimportant details ; but in this last parliamentary experience, in the last year of his career in England, he took a far higher place in Queen Elizabeth's counsels than he had ever taken before ; foreshadowing the undoubted fact that had he lived, the earnestness of his character, as well as his great ability, would have led him to the very highest honours in the state. He also took prominent part in the bill to expel all Jesuits and Popish priests the kingdom :—a strong measure, but certainly just and necessary. He appears at the same time to have taken part in the complicated web of Scottish politics then distressing Elizabeth, who with Mary on her hands as a prisoner, ever plotting conspiracies, had at the same time more or less trouble with her captive's son James, then on the Scottish throne. Walsingham—Sidney's father-in-law—was sent to Scotland to observe and report. His report, which we may be sure, from the character of the man, was both a wise and conscientious one, would have served equally well for James, and either of his immediate successors. “Dissimulation and treachery” he reports to be that monarch's distinguishing characteristics, and a readiness “at any moment to requite kindness with ingratitude.”

War at length broke out, England having decided on helping the Netherlands. Queen Elizabeth being just then

in one of her resolute moods, issued a noble proclamation defining the duty which princes owed to God, and referring to the ancient ties between the English and the Netherlands, and the desolation and sufferings which had come to them at the hands of cruel and bigoted Spain, "until honest reproach and earnest counsel having been used in vain she was forced to take up the sword and let its arguments be tried." Sir Philip Sidney was appointed Governor of Flushing by a patent granted at Westminster, and after taking leave of Penshurst, friends, Court, and Queen, he departed on the 16th of November, 1585, for the seat of war.

He is fated never to return to his native land again. The Medway will murmur on as before, past thorp and town, through pleasant Kentish fields, till it rests in the Northern sea ; the golden hop will climb and festoon pole to pole in the glow of setting suns ; the village festival be graced by noble forms from old manorial halls beside its stream ; but for Sidney never more the murmuring river, the yellowing corn, the "coming-home," and shout of welcome. For him, the battle-field, the gaping wound, the couch of pain, the sleep of death.

Events hurry on. In the following spring his father died, and Sidney was lord of Penshurst. Three months later, his mother, the Lady Mary, died, and on the 22nd of September the battle of Zutphen was fought, and Sir Philip Sidney dangerously wounded. In the third charge at the head of a body of horse, he was shot in the thigh, the ball cleaving the

bone and penetrating upwards. His own horse having been killed in the first charge, he had mounted another not so well trained, which took fright and galloped off the field with him. Bleeding and faint with loss of blood he was yet able to retain his seat. Afterwards he was carried by his men near where the Earl of Leicester was posted, and here, parched with thirst, he begged for something to drink. Some water was obtained as quickly as possible, and, as he raised it to his lips, he saw a poor soldier, who was being carried past mortally wounded, cast longing eyes upon the precious draught. Sidney drank nothing, but handed the flask to the dying soldier, saying, as he did so, "Thy necessity is yet greater than mine."

Removed to Arnheim, he was carefully tended, and rejoined by his wife and his brother Robert. His recovery at first was expected; but soon symptoms set in which dispelled every hope. The close of his life was a protracted scene of heroic fortitude, and the parting with his dearest friends one they never forgot. His brother Robert, to whom he was greatly attached, and who was in the battle with him at Zutphen, altogether broke down, and so distressing was his grief that Philip, when he felt his end approaching, after one touching farewell, desired him to leave the room till all was over, and, in the afternoon of the 17th of October, 1586, one of the noblest spirits that ever appeared among the English race gently passed away.

There was mourning in England when the news arrived.

The queen was overwhelmed with sorrow, and declared she had no one left who could supply his place.

On the 1st of November, followed to the water's edge by twelve hundred soldiers with arms reversed, the military band playing a "Dead March," his body was embarked in the "Black Prince," a pinnacle of his own, dressed and furnished throughout with equipments entirely of black, and, attended by other vessels, was conveyed to England.

The Netherlands desired to honour him whom they had come to love with a sumptuous burial, and a monument equal to any "that had ever been set up for any king or emperor in Christendom;" but England claimed her hero.

On its arrival in the Thames, the coffin was landed at Tower Hill, and conveyed to a private house, to await a public interment in St. Paul's Cathedral. This great funeral—half-military, half civic—occupies in contemporary reports many pages of description. A pictorial record of the whole pageant is preserved in the Library of the British Museum. His brother—now Sir Robert Sidney—followed as chief mourner. The sorrow was universal, and for months after it was thought improper for any gentleman of quality to appear but in half mourning.

Volumes might be filled with all the panegyrics that appeared, the University of Oxford alone contributing two volumes of elegiac poetry, chiefly in Latin. More heartfelt were the verses of Spenser, and, chief of all, those of Sidney's sister Mary, Countess of Pembroke :—

“ Ah me ! to whom shall I my case complain,
That may compassion my impatient grief?
Or where shall I unfold my inward pain,
That my enriven heart may find relief? ”

* * * * *

“ Woods, hills, and rivers now are desolate,
Since he is gone the which them all did grace ;
And all the fields do wail their widow state,
Since death their fairest flower did late deface.
The fairest flower in field that ever grew
Was Astrophel—*that was*, we all may rue.”

* * * * *

“ Ah, no ! it is not dead, nor can it die,
But lives for aye in blissful paradise,
Where, like a new-born babe, it soft doth lie,
In bed of lilies wrapped in tender wise,
And compassed all about with roses sweet,
And dainty violets from head to feet.”

“ Of all monuments in St. Paul’s destroyed by the great fire of London,” wrote Dean Milman, “ that of Sir Philip Sidney (it was but a tablet of wood) is the one the loss of which I most deeply deplore. His life had all the nobleness of expiring chivalry without its barbarity.”

His brother and successor, Sir Robert Sidney, afterwards created Earl of Leicester, kept up the old everyday hospitality at Penshurst, when it was breaking down throughout the land. Ben Jonson, who knew the place as these Sidneys knew it, and whose verse has so helped to perpetuate its memories, apostrophizes Penshurst as the place

“ ——— whose liberal board doth flow,
With all that hospitality doth know,
There comes no guest but is allowed to eat
Without his fear, and of thy lord’s own meat : ”

and an unexpected visit, paid by James I., gave him an opportunity of lauding Sidney's good housekeeping :—

“That found King James, when hunting late this way,
With his brave son, the prince; they saw thy fires
Shine bright on every hearth,

* * * *

What great, I will not say, but hidden cheer
Didst thou then make them! and what praise was heap'd
On thy good lady then! who therein reap'd
The just reward of all her housewifery;
To have her linen, plate, and all things nigh,
When she was far; and not a room but dress'd
As if it had expected such a guest!”

Ben Jonson had a great tenderness for Penshurst, and his is the best and most generally accepted description of it :—

“Thou art not, Penshurst, built to envious show
Of touch or marble, nor canst boast a row
Of polish'd pillars or a roof of gold:

* * * an ancient pile,

Thou joyst in better marks, of soil, of air,
Of wood, of water; therein thou art fair.
Thou hast thy walks for health as well as sport;
Thy mount, to which the Dryads do resort,
When Pan and Bacchus their high feasts have made
Beneath the broad beech and the chesnut shade.

* * * *

Thou hast thy orchard fruit, thy garden flowers,
Fresh as the air, and new as are the hours,
The early cherry, and the later plum,
Fig, grape, and prune, each in his time doth come;
The blushing apricot and woolly peach
Hang on thy walls, that every child may reach,
Although thy walls are of the county stone,¹
They're reared with no man's ruin—no man's groan!”

¹ Kentish rag.

It is now time to survey the state apartments, because the great hall, at this period of its history, 1600-25, is gradually ceasing to be the arena in which the whole life of the place centred.

The practice of dining in the hall was dying out, and with it departed all the old customs and social intercourse between dependants and families; while in its place sprang up that estrangement of different classes, the result of mutual isolation.

The apartments appear in everything pretty much what they were in Philip's, and his father Sir Henry's, time.

The furniture of Queen Elizabeth's Room was a present from the queen herself when about to make a visit here—probably made, as well it might be, for reasons already indicated. It is extremely interesting and characteristic. The rich embroidery is said to have been worked by Elizabeth and her maids of honour, to do special honour to Sir Henry, who most certainly deserved it.

The Tapestry Room contains some fine Gobelin tapestry; and there are, besides, the Pages' Room, the Ball Room, and, chief in interest, the Long Gallery. An ebony cabinet, a present from James I., stands in one recess; and there are a few personal relics to be seen belonging to both Sir Philip and Algernon Sidney, including a pair of heavy, well-worn jack-boots, belonging to the latter, which may have trodden Marston Moor. They stand by the fire-place, the massive spurs still attached to them.

But the pictures, of course, have an especial interest. Nearly all the Dudleys associated with Penshurst memories are here. Elizabeth's favourite, Robert Dudley; his brother Ambrose, Earl of Warwick; Lady Jane Grey; Sir William Sidney (of Flodden Field); his ward, Edward VI.; Sir Henry and Lady Mary, two or three of Philip Sidney—the best, to our thinking, being that painted by Zuccherò during his short stay in England, when he fled from Rome. It has more character, and we understand from it better old Languet's affectionate criticisms: "Too little fun in his nature," "Never so happy as when at hard work," "Seldom very merry," "Disliked noisy life," "Oft most alone in others' company," and also Sidney's own law of life, "That it is always best to do great things first, and let them be talked about afterwards."

There are, also, portraits of Sidney's sister, Mary, and Hubert Languet himself. Some fine Vandykes include one of Dorothea Sidney (Waller's *Saccharissa*), and there are a number of comparatively modern portraits, with, of course, the inevitable Ramsay of George III., in profile, dressed in a richly embroidered scarlet coat. That so many of them exist is due to the fact that the king invariably presented his portrait to all ambassadors, governors of colonies, &c.; and Ramsay thus had a busy time of it.

The portrait of Sir Robert Sidney, the first of the Sidneys created Earl of Leicester, if less interesting, has another claim to regard. He furnishes the link which connects, by personal



association, the two greatest Sidneys, Philip and Algernon. Nearly forty years had rolled away since, on the occasion of the great funeral procession to St. Paul's, he followed Philip as chief mourner :—the observed of all observers—the brother who had fought with the hero at Zutphen, and whose grief was almost too much for the dying Philip. Four years before his death, a young grandson, Algernon Sidney, was born, and lived to climb the grandsire knees of the old man of Zutphen: Sir Robert Sidney (Earl of Leicester) dying in 1626, aged seventy. “So runs the story of their lives away!”

In the Long Gallery there is another picture, before which we stand and gaze with an interest that no portrait of one merely distinguished by rank could awaken. It is that of a man well advanced in life. The face is stern, but noble and enthusiastic in expression; the eyes, full of the calm resolve of melancholy thought; the hair, darker than in the earlier portraits, and slightly tinged with grey. Most faces bear in the lines and modelling shaped and sculptured by the workings of the hidden mind, either a history or a prophecy; this one markedly so. The head is slightly turned in profile to the left; the arm and form lean lightly but firmly on a thick book; the book is inscribed with a single word, but one that had more significance in 1683 than in these latter days. The word is “*Libertas*,” inscribed in old Roman characters. In the background rises the Tower and there is also the executioner's axe. The one seems a pendant to the other, as if to suggest that the paths of political liberty then led but to

the grave. The inscribed book was painted with the portrait—the background is posthumous, though painted immediately after death. The portrait is that of Algernon Sidney!

The second son of a large family of children, which included, amongst the fairer half, Waller's Saccharissa—the lady who inspired that English ever-green—

“Go, lovely rose!”

a far higher production than his “lofty beeches, in one Flame”—here, amidst these sylvan scenes, rich in venerable trees and wide-spreading park, and pleasant lea, the boys grew up side by side, and waxed strong and manly, and accomplished in all graces that might become a gentleman and a Sidney.

An excellent mother, who was not slow to mark Algernon's noble character and “sweetness of nature,” made some amends for a harsh and capricious father.

While yet on the threshold of manhood, Algernon Sidney served with his elder brother, Lord L'Isle, in Ireland, and the young soldier won in numerous encounters a reputation for “great spirit and resolution.” Then came the great Civil War, and Algernon was not long in deciding whom he should serve. At Marston Moor we find Colonel Sidney with the Parliamentary army. At the head of the Earl of Manchester's regiment of horse, he charged the enemy at a critical moment, and came off with great honour, but so desperately wounded that he owed his life to the self-devotion of one of Cromwell's soldiers. The fight of that soft July evening, on the wide

barren heath of Marston Moor, six miles from York, was fatal to Charles I. In vain were the impetuous charges of Rupert's brilliant show-troops, and Goring's cavalry, when opposed to the sterner and nobler qualities now developed by the soldiers of the great Commonwealth. These high-born, reckless cavaliers, who at first carried everything before them, will win no more ! A nation once thoroughly roused to the defence of its liberties, can furnish men whose weight is more than a match for the domination of a class. The setting sun, sinking amidst broken clouds behind the wild Yorkshire moor, breaking out here and there in sudden gleams of transient brightness, is symbolic of their failing cause—symbolic also of its blood-stained close, when, the moment before sinking, it touches the edge of the horizon, and pausing there, the contact flushes the low-lying heath with a crimson blaze reflected in broken armour, steel casque, and flashing cuirass.

Devotion, dauntless gallantry, and self-sacrifice enough were displayed by the Royalists. After that short battle—commenced at 7 P. M. and over by dark—the heaps of slain were remarkable. Of one regiment, Newcastle's "Lambs" (so called from their white woollen clothing, which they refused to have dyed, saying that their heart's blood would dye it soon enough), only thirty answered the muster-roll, and the bodies of the rest were found on the moor, lying in ranks, side by side.

"The distinction," writes Mr. Forster, "which separated these sons of a common country seemed trifling now ! The plumed helmet embraced the strong steel cap, as they rolled

on the heath together, and the loose love-locks of the careless cavalier lay drenched in the dark blood of the enthusiastic Republican." There is no need to contrast the devotion and courage displayed on either side. As Dryden sang :—

“Thousands were there, in darker fame that dwell,
Whose deeds some nobler poem shall adorn ;
And though to me unknown, they sure fought well
When Rupert led, and who were British-born !”

Sidney's wounds were long in healing. Passing over minor events, he next comes prominently to the front, together with Sir Harry Vane—son of Sir Harry Vane, of Hadlow, a few miles from Penshurst—as the opponents of the despotic policy of Cromwell. The gallant resistance made by these two Kentish gentlemen is one of the most striking episodes in the history of that period. When all further opposition was useless, and Cromwell had made himself Protector, thus overthrowing that form of Republicanism so dear to Sidney, he returned to the seclusion of Penshurst, and thought his thoughts on the great subjects of how best to govern men, and all that he has embodied in his “Discourses on Government,” written at this time. The “Essay on Love,” in which he avows the extremely advanced opinion that, with the advantages of a liberal education, the female intellect is fully capable of all the nobler achievements of the human mind, is another of the products of this period of seclusion.

The Restoration found him on a diplomatic mission at Copenhagen. Events soon showed how unsafe would be

any return to England. No faith could be placed in the king's word, and Sidney's principles were inflexible. After his friend Vane had perished on Tower Hill, having pleaded the famous statute of Morton of Knole to no purpose, and displayed at his trial and execution a degree of courage and fortitude that only a good cause can fully inspire, Sidney saw that return to his native country had become impossible, and resigned himself to his fate. Then followed those long, weary years of exile, full of bitterness suppressed and yearnings unfulfilled, traceable in the noble lines and refined modelling of the pale countenance before us. Years, full of aspirations for usefulness crushed, consciousness of power and ability wasted; years haunted with thoughts of pleasant Kentish woods and hills and dales; of returning springs by Penshurst hedgerows budding fair, which not for him returned; a wanderer, with the echo of his own sad steps for ever sounding in his ear, and for whom "ever would the unborn faces shine beside the never-lighted fire." Yet even there, the echo of the shrill, heartless laughter of an ignoble, dissolute Court reached him, and jarred upon his finely-strung nature. He writes sadly at this time: "I confess we are naturally inclined to delight in our own country, and I have a particular love to mine; I hope I have given some testimony of it. I think that being exiled from it is a great evil, and would redeem myself from it with the loss of a great deal of my blood. But when that country of mine, which used to be esteemed a paradise, is now like to be made a stage of injury; the liberty which we hoped to establish,

oppressed ; luxury and lewdness set up in its height, instead of the piety, sobriety, and modesty, which we hoped God by our hands would have introduced : the parliament, court, and army corrupted, the people enslaved ; all things vendible, no man safe, but by such evil and infamous means as flattery and bribery ; what joy can I have in my own country in this condition ? Shall I renounce all my old principles, learn the vile court arts, and make my peace by bribing some of them ? Shall, then, corruption and vice be my safety ? Ah, no ! better is a life among strangers than in my own country under such conditions. Whilst I live I will endeavour to preserve my liberty, or, at least, not consent to the destroying of it. I hope I shall die in the same principles in which I have lived, and will live no longer than they can preserve me. I have in my life been guilty of many follies, but, as I think, of no meanness ; I will not blot and defile that which is past, by endeavouring to provide for the future. I have ever had it in my mind, that when God should cast me into such a condition, as that I cannot save my life but by doing an indecent thing, He shows me that the time is come wherein I should resign it. And when I cannot live in my own country but by such means as are worse than dying in it, I think He shows me that I ought to keep out of it. Let them please themselves with making the king glorious who think that a whole people may justly be sacrificed for the interest and pleasure of one man and a few of his followers.

* * * * *



“The honour of English parliaments have ever been in making the nation glorious and happy, not in selling and destroying the interest of it, to gratify the lusts of one man.”

Not all in vain was the sacrifice of exile for the grand old principles of which he was one of the noblest representatives, and for which his friend Vane had perished on the scaffold, Hampden on the battle-field, and Eliot in the Tower. It has borne its fruit. Sidney's principles, branded in the seventeenth century as treasonable, have become in the nineteenth century constitutional. The torch of Freedom passed on from hand to hand, until the restriction of kingly prerogatives on the one hand, and the expansion of the national on the other, have culminated in the stability of a throne—

“Broad-based upon the peoples' will,”

a consummation mainly due to the efforts and sacrifices of such men as Algernon Sidney.

Thus year after year passed away in watching for the “sail” that came not. The golden prime of manhood ripened, flourished, and then faded into autumn, and still went on—in exile. In all overtures for his return, made by many friends, he rejected any proposition that involved a surrender of his principles. Wearily he writes to his father on this subject :—
“I cannot help it if I judge amiss, I did not make myself, nor can I correct the defects of my own creation ; I walk in the light God hath given me, if it be dim or uncertain, I must bear the penalty of my errors. I hope to do it with patience, and

that no burden shall be very grievous to me, except sin and shame."

England, though viewed from afar, with such poor means of communicating intelligence as then existed, presented indeed at that time a spectacle sad enough to make any thoughtful man grave. But a few years had elapsed since the Restoration, and already our naval supremacy had gone down, as it had before gone down under the two first Stuarts, though splendidly restored under the Commonwealth. The great plague had spread a desolation, the harrowing details of which are only paralleled by the Hebrew records of the Old Testament; and the following year the flames of the great fire of London rolled up like a scroll 400 streets, and 13,000 houses, from the Tower to the Temple. Yet the orgies of Whitehall went on! Endless *festas* reigned in the English Acropolis, and the temple that should have held a divinity was tenanted by a satyr instead, attended by a priesthood of courtezans.

When the first Dutch war broke out (1665), Sidney might have seen how changed was the tone of thought, in the popular verses of his neighbour, young Dorset of Knole, then serving on board the English fleet:—

"To all you *ladies* now at land."

Two years afterwards (1667) England had fallen so low as not to be able to defend its own shores, and the Dutch were able to inflict the greatest affront any country has ever yet had to sustain. De Ruyter sailed up the Medway with

part of his fleet of seventy-two ships of the line, destroyed a number of our men-of-war, right under the shelter of their own homes, beside the Kentish meadows, and—deep humiliation—returned in safety. Sidney at this time was living in obscurity in the south of France, and a great gap—which includes this period—exists in the continuity of his correspondence; but we may be sure the painful episode in our history was peculiarly humiliating to his *amor patriæ*.

Upnor Castle, the scene of this degradation, is seated on the Medway at one extremity, near its outlet to the sea, Penshurst at the other. From Penshurst you may trace the little stream threading its devious way to Tunbridge, and thence Sidney—knowing it so well—might have prolonged his mental vision, and seen his native stream flow through the beautiful valley of the Medway, called the “Garden of Eden,” and the “finest ten miles in England,” to Maidstone. It widens down the valley after passing that town, flowing past quiet meadows, and apple and cherry-orchards, displaying in spring one universal burst of mingled red and white blossoms; past crowded hop-gardens, and little hamlets nestling under the shadow of grey church towers, such as *Aylesford*, looking out from clustering elm trees backed by chalky hills; away onward between banks thickly peopled in Roman times and still abounding in Roman remains; past Cobham Woods, and the ancient “Pilgrim’s Way,” the river still widening as it flows, the valley becoming more open its banks receding, baring their bosom to the warm sun and open sky, revealing a rich country

covered with corn-fields and fertile pastures on either hand, until at length it sweeps swiftly past the great old Norman keep, Rochester Castle—unaltered since Sidney's time—and after passing the bridge, bends suddenly to the right, and soon flows between the dockyard of Chatham on one side, and Upnor Castle on the other, in front of which the Dutch burnt the “Royal Oak,” and some of the largest and most powerful ships in the English navy.

The wooden walls of Old England were not those of Charles II. ! Pepys for once forgot to romp with Lady Penn and “Peg,” in Navy Gardens, and buried his silver and gold in the garden instead.

Beyond this point, the Medway, leaving Gillingham—an ancient Saxon settlement—on the right, winds through and past one of the most bleak and barren scenes in England—the marsh country. The desolate marshes extend for many miles until the river loses itself in the open sea at the Nore. This district has always for us had a strange fascination. So lonely, so silent, so pathetic in its dead level of grey monotonous desolation. A wilderness of marsh intersected everywhere by innumerable dykes and creeks up which the water creeps, and at spring-tides rises high enough to wet the poor grass and coarse weeds with a salt flavour that repels any stray sheep or cattle. Its geographical distribution is locally known by weird-like titles, such as “Tom-all-alones,” and others equally strange and expressive, which Dickens, who knew this district from boyhood, seized upon with avidity, and

utilized in his best works. We remember it in bygone days, when there could yet be seen remains of the gibbets where pirates hung in chains, swinging to and fro in the night wind with a dull creaking noise. What few other sounds broke the silence were such as those made by the scream of the wild sea-mew, the plover's cry, or the ripple of the water washing in the reeds. Sometimes skeletons were washed out, and laid bare in the creeks. We boys always called them "dead Dutchmen"! De Ruyter buried many men on these marshes; more who died from some sickness prevailing in the fleet, than from the fight and wounds.

Dickens often rambled here, threading its mist-laden creeks, beguiled by the desolate spirit of the scene, until he let it burn itself into his imagination and then peopled it with creatures of his own. Years after, when "Great Expectations" appeared, people were fascinated by the power and peculiar flavour of his ghostly landscape, but very few knew how literally and topographically accurate it was. "He is a fool," said a great painter, "who cannot paint without Nature," and, he added, "he is a fool who does!" In those days the *Hulks* were moored in the River Medway: two immense floating prisons for convicts, who were taken on shore to work in the dockyards or on other public works by day. It was no uncommon thing to hear the gun fire at night in token that another convict had effected an escape; generally by swimming to these dreary marshes, where they would hide for days in the creeks, sometimes hunted out and recaptured by

the soldiers, sometimes escaping altogether, by the aid of a friendly hand, and there were very few so hard-natured as to take any action to denounce them.

The opening lines are as faithful as a sun-picture :—

“ Ours was the marsh country down to the river, within, as the river wound, twenty miles of the sea. My first most vivid and broad impression of identity of things, seems to have been gained on a memorable rainy afternoon towards evening. At such a time I found out for certain that the bleak place overgrown with nettles was the churchyard, . . . and that the dark flat wilderness beyond the churchyard, intersected with dykes and mounds and gates, with scattered cattle feeding on it, was the marshes; and that the long leaden line beyond was the river, and that the distant savage lair from which the wind was rushing, was the sea; and that the small bundle of shivers groaning, afraid of it all, and beginning to cry, was Pip.” The “fearful man all in coarse grey, with a great iron on his leg,” was the natural product and the ordinary adjunct of the scene. “The marshes were just a long, black, horizontal line then, as I stopped to look after him; and the river was just another horizontal line, not nearly so broad nor yet so black; and the sky was just a rim of long angry red lines intermingled. On the edge of the river I could faintly make out the only two black things in all the prospect that seemed to be standing upright; one of these was the beacon by which the sailors steered—like an unhooped cask upon a pole—an ugly thing when you were near

it ; the other a gibbet, with some chains hanging to it, which had once held a pirate. The man in coarse grey was limping on towards this latter, as if he were the pirate come to life and come down, and going back to hook himself up again."

But we must return to Penshurst. The summer of 1667 found the aged earl, Sidney's father, stricken in years, and possessed with a desire to see once more, ere he turned his face to the wall, the son whom, with all his harshness and caprice, he yet loved. Through the influence and Court interest of the Earl of Sunderland, Saccharissa's son, and Sidney's nephew, an assurance of safety was given ; and after seventeen years of exile, Algernon Sidney returned to Penshurst to his father's roof—the same, yet not the same. The dashing young soldier of Marston Moor, the diplomatist of thirty-seven previous to the Restoration, was now the worn, grave, yet stately man of fifty-five. The old earl shortly after died, and Sidney remained without molestation, but with no political or active career open to him. He watched the times : the times were portentous ; but Sidney looked on and made no sign.

At length came the dissolution of Parliament, and Sidney was persuaded by his dearest and closest friend, William Penn, to stand for Guildford. The Court, alarmed, took dishonest means to prevent his return, in which they basely succeeded. The new parliament proved refractory, and Charles dissolved again. Again Sidney stood for the Rape of Bramber, near Penn's seat at Worminghurst, where Penn's interest was paramount. In this dire emergency, the Court

of Charles resorted to the vilest expedients to keep Algernon Sidney out of Parliament, and succeeded but too well.

From this failure to carry Sidney's election for the Rape of Bramber sprang the memorable events which so inseparably connect America with us, and to which America owes so much by the form into which these events were moulded. It is difficult now to invest them with the supreme importance they have had upon the destiny of such a great country as America. The love of country was strong, but the love of personal freedom was stronger. Penn, wearied of strife and wrong, loathing the vice and corruption of the Stuart Court, seeing no hope of liberty in England, turned his thoughts to the New World, where, amidst the virgin forests, broad plains, and untrodden valleys of that vast continent, he might hope to found a home where right and justice should prevail, and tyranny and persecution should never come.

This remarkable man, the son of a Commonwealth admiral, and a "Quaker" by principle, was united to Algernon Sidney by no ordinary ties of friendship: not the warmth and ingenuous attachment of youth, nor the shallow grounds of mere personal preference and liking, but the friendship cemented by deep interest in objects beyond themselves, objects dear only to the noblest minds.

It was much that the founders of the New World were not mere emigrants, with no higher object than to better their condition. It was more that at this critical period a man of

Penn's nobility and purity should have arisen to initiate and carry out the movement. What America owes to this impulse, which yet survives, is incalculable. Broad and deep were the foundations laid by Penn, inspired by Sidney; and their influence has survived and given a moral strength and fibre to a nation which no deteriorating precocity incidental to too rapid growth and material progress, or the introduction of foreign and alien elements, has been able to overcome or destroy. America was first peopled by no convict element, but by the best spirits, physically and morally, of the England of that period. Peculiarly happy must that country be deemed whose politics and social beginnings were cast in the mould of such minds as those of Algernon Sidney and William Penn.

With what care was the plan of government drawn up! Sidney went to Penn's place at Worminghurst, and there, in long, close counsel, these two great men drew up a system of administration pregnant with the gravest issues to the human race. The whole range of ancient and modern history was brought to bear upon the subject, and the most advanced theories were tested by recorded experience. Every clause was discussed, and weighed, and remodelled; and when the draft was complete Sidney took it home to Penshurst here, and revised the whole once more. They had many friendly differences, for Penn loved the great Republican as a brother, and looked up to him, as his elder, like a son; but he could never give his heart up wholly to the idea of a country governed in the pride of intellect and virtue. Fox, another

friend, supplied what Sidney wanted—faith in things unseen, and passionate belief in individual men. Penn could feel and act with both ; looking up with Sidney to the free government of Pericles and Scipio, yet denying, with Fox, that past example is of higher use to man than inner light. When it was at length finally completed by Sidney, Penn, however, cordially approved of many of his alterations, and thus much of the Constitution of Pennsylvania was penned beneath this roof at Penshurst.

What is written we know, if not the exact share which may be allotted to each ; but the unwritten words that passed between them here and at Worminghurst were, we may be sure, of equal worth in shaping and tempering the mind of Penn for the great executive ability he afterwards displayed.

There are always rocks and shoals not laid down in the chart, which only a trained mind can deal with as they from time to time arise. Penshurst should be even dearer to Pennsylvania than to ourselves !

The late Sydney Dobell has placed the inseparable association we hold as the inheritors of a common past, in its happiest light :—

“ All the Pilgrim Fathers were little sons
In merrie homes of Englande. Back and see
Thy satchelled ancestor ! Behold, he runs
To mine, and, clasped, they tread the equal lea
To the same village-school, where side by side
They spell “ Our Father.” Hard by the twin-pride
Of that grey hall whose ancient oriel gleams
Thro’ yon baronial pines, with looks of light

Our sister mothers sat beneath one tree.
Meanwhile our Shakespeare wanders past and dreams
His Helena and Hermia. Shall *we* fight?"

In the autumn of 1682, Penn sailed in the "Welcome," having parted with Sidney as only such friends part. They never met again. Penn went on to his mission fraught with results beyond his wildest dream. Sidney, to another end. Already "the mildest herald by our fate allotted" beckoned unseen by either, and that fate was the executioner, and a block on Tower Hill!

The Rye House Plot, the implication of Sidney, the iniquitous trial presided over by the atrocious Jeffreys, belong to history. The contrast between the judges of our own day and he who presided over one of the most scandalously unjust trials ever recorded is startling. Jeffreys not content with delivering a grossly unfair charge to the jury, followed the jurors out, under the pretence of taking a glass of sack, in order to intercept them and make assurance doubly sure. And this is not yet two hundred years ago!

Sidney's life was a standing reproach to such a court as that of Charles II. Of no great political importance or power, his moral influence was immense—

"His strength was as the strength of ten,
Because his heart was pure."

And the shameless courtezans, and the supporters of the king's despotic policy, were resolved upon compassing his death.

We see Sidney no more until that December morning, 1683, on Tower Hill, where, just upon a hundred years before (1586), Sir Philip Sidney's body was landed from Zutphen. With unfaltering tread and head erect he stepped on the platform, while the motionless headsman stood surveying the crowd above and below. He made no address—the time for words was past—but, handing the customary guineas to the executioner, laid his head, with a weary smile, upon the block.

“Are you ready, sir?” cries the headsman, as he grasps the axe. “Will you rise again?”

“Not till the general resurrection. Strike on!” was the patriot's reply; and in another moment the head of a man worth a hecatomb of Stuarts rolled in the dust.

Owing to the great interest possessed by his family, his remains were restored to them, and on the following day interred here at Penshurst, where, in the family vault, they yet remain.

About the same time, Penn, in happy ignorance of the fate of his dear friend, was carrying out that famous meeting of the Indian chiefs on the banks of the Delaware—putting into practice the theories of Sidney and himself in this first organized meeting of the white man and the red. How different the scene! There, on the one hand, the dense masses of cedar, pine, and chestnut spread far away into the interior of the land; on the other, the noble river rolled its majestic waters down to the Atlantic. In the centre of the group stands William Penn, noble and comely in person, as in

character. The Indians are in their forest costume of brilliant feathers, sparkling in the sun, their bodies glistening with red, blue, and yellow paint. Penn lays his scroll on the ground ; the Sachems receive his proposal, for themselves and for their children. "No oath, no seals, no mummeries were used," writes the biographer of Penn ; "the treaty was ratified on both sides with 'yea'—and, unlike treaties which are sworn and sealed, was kept."





KNOLE.

“Lov’st thou through autumn’s fading realms to stray,
To see the heath-flower wither’d on the hill,
To listen to the wood’s expiring lay.”—SCOTT.



RAND old trees—the kingly oak, the hero-beech,
the full-leaved chestnut, stately groves and shady
avenues, with vistas of woodland path—are never
more magnificent than when autumn has laid

“a fiery finger on the leaves.”

Gorgeous then are the wide-stretching slopes of undulating park and woodland scenery at Knole. Herds of deer, half shrouded in fern, chequer the green slopes, or troop noiselessly across the plain, and far away on either hand deep glade and shady copse tell how vast is the magnificent enclosure that embosoms the antique splendour of Knole. When the sun is sinking in the west, and barred clouds bloom the soft dying day, the October woods, clothed in

their richest dyes, wear a glory that fills the heart almost to sadness. The beauty and immense size of the trees is most impressive. Impressive also is the calm, pensive stillness, the hushed quietude, unbroken save by such sounds as those of the falling acorn, the sudden flight of a bird, or the patter of the light hoofs of some stray deer on the crisp fallen leaves; and the absence of all indication of proximity to the feverish life of cities is indescribably grateful. What more refreshing—

“in an age where every hour
Must sweat its sixty minutes to the death.”

The park at Knole contains a thousand acres; a noble avenue of trees leads up to the ancient house. “The park is sweet,” wrote Walpole, “with much old beech, and an immense sycamore before the great gate which makes me more in love than ever with sycamores.” The trees themselves have a cultivated, patrician air, as though their sap was of the bluest; they seem never to have run wild, and to have been always accustomed to the best society; descendants of other ancient trees, having a lineage as unbroken and exclusive as park-palings can make it. There is an old oak—a little to the left of the path, enclosed in railings—that may have sheltered bold barons and knights in the days of the Plantagenets! Indeed, all the richly dressed cavaliers and peerless dames whose portraits line the oaken-panelled galleries in yonder stately house, once strutted and ambled beneath the

shade of these grand old trees, and talked soft nonsense and court-gossip, the whispered scandal, or the grave state secret. At the end of the long avenue known as the Duchess's Walk stands the "hero-beech." Coleridge in his happiest vein named the birch "the lady of the woods," a term which well befits the delicate grace of that beautiful tree. Mrs. Radcliffe, pursuing the same subject, says, "I should call a beech tree, and this beech above all others, 'the hero of the forest,' as the oak is called 'the king.'" It is not now so perfect as we remember it thirty years syne, but it is yet a magnificent tree ; carrying its light foliage to a great height, and with a majesty almost sublime. With all its size and grandeur, there is nothing heavy or formal about it, but a certain airiness that suggests the strength and fire of a hero.

The remoter slopes, with their deep carpeting of fern, their scattered holly trees, which in winter glisten with the reddest of red berries, reminding us of Southey's "Holly Tree," are full of attraction to the landscape painter. Then the great oaks in full vigour ! The laureate may have found here the prototype of his "talking oak," hidden to the knees in fern ; the oak that to the lover's passionate questioning as to the unparalleled charms of his Olivia answered thus :—

" O Walter, I have shelter'd here
Whatever maiden grace
The good old summers, year by year,
Made ripe in Sumner-chace,



ST. JOHN'S HOUSE

“Old summers, when the monk was fat,
And, issuing shorn and sleek,
Would twist his girdle tight, and pat
The girls upon the cheek,

“Ere yet, in scorn of Peter’s-pence
And number’d bead, and shrift,
Bluff Harry broke into the spence
And turn’d the cowls adrift ;

“And I have shadow’d many a group
Of beauties, that were born
In teacup-times of hood and hoop,
Or while the patch was worn.”

But surely the old oak must have been a courtier at heart,
when he spoke so slightingly of fairies while making excellent
use of them in turning a delicate compliment :—

“For as to fairies, that will flit
To make the greensward fresh,
I hold them exquisitely knit,
But far too spare of flesh.”

And of Olivia contrastingly swore—

“by leaf, and wind, and rain,
That tho’ I circle in the grain
Five hundred rings of years—

“Yet, since I first could cast a shade,
Did never creature pass
So slightly, musically made,
So light upon the grass.”

Yet this talking oak should not have misused his privileges,
and he grew culpable when he babbled of her confidences
thus :—

“And here she came, and round me play’d,
 And sang to me the whole
 Of those three stanzas that you made
 About my ‘giant bole;’

“And in a fit of frolic mirth
 She strove to span my waist :
 Alas, I was so broad of girth,
 I could not be embraced.”

And how slyly the old fellow sighed and wished himself—

“the fair young beech
 That here beside me stands,
 That round me, clasping each in each,
 She might have lock’d her hands.”

Still more reprehensible is the telling how that, having found
 and kissed the name carved by her lover’s hand upon the
 tree, she yet “with flushed cheek” and sidelong glance, turned,
 and when—

“not a creature was in sight
 She kiss’d me once again !

“Her kisses were so close and kind
 That, trust me on my word,
 Hard wood I am, and wrinkled rind,
 But yet my sap was stirr’d.”

The old order changeth, yielding place to new, and such
 places as Knole were in other days centres of influence, which
 we now can scarcely understand or realize in an age of
 steam, and rapid change, and growth, and development. But,
 amidst all these joustings of an antique time, we may discern



in the lineaments of every face depicted on the time-stained walls of Knole, indications of the same qualities, the same passions and desires, and feel how much more our race has that makes them one, than all the difference in their external surroundings can make them two.

On the high ground to the south-west of Knole superb views may be obtained over the Wealds of Kent and Sussex, for Sevenoaks is the northern boundary of the Kentish Weald. England has no fairer prospect than that from any of the roads descending the sandstone ridge into the Weald country. To the left the view is only bounded on the east by the Dover cliffs, and to the right, in the west by the Hampshire coast.

Long stretches of park and forest scenery intervene: full of variety, sleeping in sunshine, or chequered by every passing cloud; one tract lit up by a sudden gleam, another thrown into grey shadow, now black with driving rain, now soft with misty light and purple distance.

Somewhere in the Weald—the exact spot is unknown—was the birthplace of William Caxton, the first English printer (d. 1494). “I was born,” he says, “and lerned myne English in Kente, in the Weeld, where English is spoken broad and rude.”

The Kentish Weald was part of that vast forest which was supposed to have been in Alfred's time 120 miles in length by thirty in breadth, the Kentish portion alone covering 400 square miles. The large trees of which it was formed

had grown up through immemorial ages over the Wealden deposits—the fresh water deposits of that mighty pre-historic river, the bed of which extended farther than we can venture to assign a limit. All through British, Roman, and Saxon times, it remained a mighty impenetrable forest, the lair of wild beasts and the haunt of unpreserved game. Not until after the Norman Conquest did it slowly give way to the woodman's axe and the ploughman's share. It blocked the way of Cæsar when he landed in Britain; and William the Conqueror, after routing the Saxons and slaying Harold at Senlac, was glad to avoid a march through the forest-weald by proceeding along the coast.

The Weald of Kent is thus one of the best-wooded districts in England, and Augustine's report of the great oaks induced Gregory the Great to request that British timber should be sent to Rome for building the churches of SS. Peter and Paul.



Knole has had many masters. In the great day of priestly power, when the See of Canterbury alone boasted of sixteen palaces, Knole was one of them. The most notable of its whilom priestly occupants was Archbishop—afterwards Cardinal—Morton (1487), a man whose sterling honesty was remarkable. A staunch Lancastrian, he yet was trusted by

Edward IV., and his confidence was fully justified. Under his Lancastrian successor, Henry VII., Morton was equally trusted and honoured. To Cardinal Morton we owe the famous statute protecting from penalty of treason all who act under a *de facto* king. Shakespeare introduces him (then Bishop of Ely) in his "Richard III.," but it is not to Knole that the Duke of Gloucester alludes, when he enters the council-chamber and makes soft speech to those he wishes to conciliate, but to Morton's famous garden in High Holborn, celebrated for its strawberries!

"*Glou.* My Lord of Ely, when I was last in Holborn,
I saw good strawberries in your garden there :
I do beseech you, send for some of them.
Ely. Marry, and will, my lord, with all my heart."

While Master of Knole, Cardinal Morton received visits from Henry VII., and in 1500 here he died, leaving behind him a great reputation. His successor, Archbishop Warham, entertained, in his turn, Henry VIII.

Cranmer, the next occupant, *resigned*—a word of comprehensive meaning—the place to Henry VIII. It then passed through the hands of a succession of royal favourites who put their trust in princes, and was bestowed and forfeited several times during the next half-century. John Dudley Earl of Warwick (afterwards Duke of Northumberland, and father-in-law of Lady Jane Grey), Cardinal Pole, Robert Dudley Earl of Leicester, in turn possessed it. In 1573 Queen Elizabeth

took occasion to visit "her house at Knole." Finally, it came into the possession of Thomas Sackville the poet, Baron Buckhurst, and afterwards Earl of Dorset, in whose family—though once alienated for a short time—it has ever since remained.

On the death of William Cecil, Lord Burghley, Baron Buckhurst became Queen Elizabeth's Lord Treasurer, and in order that he might be more within reach of the Council-board,—a matter of some consequence, according to Camden, as the Lord Treasurer was a man "equally eminent for prudence and nobility," and found it almost impossible to travel to and fro from his seat at Buckhurst to London, through "fowle ways" and roads that knew no Elizabethan General Wade,—a grant of the nearer estate of Knole was made to him. But though Elizabeth gave him the reversion and fee simple of the estates, he had to wait many years for the expiry of two leases granted by his predecessors, the Duke of Northumberland and the Earl of Leicester.

"The graceful Sackville," Lord of Buckhurst and Knole, a statesman of great ability, an accomplished gentleman, endowed by nature with a handsome person, and mental powers of no ordinary kind, formed one of that distinguished group of which Elizabeth was the central figure. A kinsman of the Queen's, a Boleyn on the maternal side, his father's mother having been the sister of Sir Thomas Boleyn, Anne's father, he was thus second cousin to Elizabeth, and might well aspire to rich and powerful alliances for his children.



THE HUNDRED YEAR OLD TREE, STONE PARK.

A brilliant wedding more than once enlivened the old walls of Buckhurst and Knole, and Elizabethan costumes made picturesque that which noble forms and sweet English faces had already [made beautiful. The Lord Treasurer gave his daughter, the Lady Jane, in marriage to the young Viscount Montague of Cowdray in Sussex,—grand old Cowdray, destroyed with all its treasures by fire in 1793, at the same time that its absent lord, the *last* Lord Montague, was drowned by accident at the Falls of Schaffhausen—the lord of many manors and lands, and with a stately town house near London Bridge, which had formerly been the great Priory of St. Mary Overies, bestowed by Henry VIII., and now known as Montague Close.

Montague was the eldest son of the “great Roman Catholic lord,” who with his son and grandson, “a yonge child, very comelie, seated on horseback,” came attended by 200 horse to join Elizabeth at Tilbury, in the time of the Armada; a piece of loyalty, despite his creed, her Majesty never forgot, and her visit afterwards to Cowdray was the occasion of much revelry and feasting, and magnificent display.

This match, notwithstanding appearances, proved more fortunate to the bridegroom than the bride, for by and bye the son-in-law of the Lord Treasurer needed the exertion of all the latter’s powerful influence to keep his head on his shoulders. As one of the Catholic nobles, a hostile faction succeeded in deeply implicating him in the Gunpowder Plot, after the accession of James I. Guy Fawkes had been one

of Montague's servants nearest his person, and Catesby had at least warned Montague of what was impending, and he had determined on finding an excuse to absent himself from his place in Parliament on the eventful day. Montague was unable to give any satisfactory refutation of these exceedingly criminating facts, and worse still, had ventured more than one explanation. His life was in imminent danger, but Lady Jane and her father were powerful enough to rescue him from the Tower, where he, however, was confined nearly a year, and only escaped by the payment of a very heavy fine.

Two years after, the Lord Councillor died suddenly at King James's Council-table, and his death made way for James's Scotch favourites, and thereby laid the foundation of the ruin of the Stuart race.

The great public career of Sackville has somewhat obscured his earlier literary claims, but they are of such importance as to ever ensure him a place in the history of our literature. His play of "*Gordubuc*," acted before Elizabeth in 1561, was the first genuine tragedy in our language written in blank verse, divided into acts and scenes, and clothed in the form of a regular drama. Force of conception and expression were markedly his, and in his own world of the sombre and the sad he displayed real poetic genius. Professor Craik, in his "*History of English Literature and Language*," says: "Sackville and his two poems in the '*Mirror for Magistrates*,' and more especially in the *Induction*, must be considered as forming the connecting link, or bridge, be-

tween Chaucer and Spenser, between the 'Canterbury Tales' and the 'Fairy Queen.'"

He also happily compares the constrained air, the stiffness and hardness of his style, to that of the early Italian painters before Raphael and Michael Angelo arose to convert the art from a painful repetition or mimicry of reality into a process of creation—from the timid slave of Nature into her glorified rival.

Of the flow and variety, the genuine spirit of light and life that we have in Spenser and Shakespeare, there is little in Sackville. His poetry is still oppressed by the shadows of night, and we see that although the darkness is retiring, the sun has not yet risen.

Before his death, at the age of seventy-five (1608), the Lord Treasurer Sackville, created Earl of Dorset by James I., greatly improved Knole, keeping constantly some 200 workmen employed there. The mansion is an immense pile of buildings, covering an area of five acres, and since his time no material change has been made.

We thus have in Knole one of the most interesting of all the old baronial residences in England. The apartments are in good preservation, and the fittings and decorations remaining unaltered, we get a complete view of the surroundings of English nobles of the time of Elizabeth and James I.

A walk through the ancient galleries and chambers brings one face to face, in all but personal contact, with the externals of English history subsequent to the sixteenth century.

A visible odour of bygone days pervades every room that opens its doors upon curiously wrought hinges, revealing polished floors, trodden by feet whose steps yet reverberate through the corridors of history. Tapestryed walls, stately beds, embroidered curtains, antique cabinets, and massive silver utensils surround you wherever you pause for a moment, or sit down upon one of the faded satin-covered settees, to look through the antique-shaped panes of the bayed windows, at the tall trees that sigh and rustle in the autumn breeze.

The picturesque furniture chiefly belongs to the reigns of James I. and Charles I. Some of it may generally be seen depicted in more than one painting on the walls of the Royal Academy's Exhibition in May. The quaint settee before us figured in a famous picture by Marcus Stone, some seasons ago. "Fire-dogs" of an antique character seem indigenous to the place. One very fine set came from Hever Castle, but a few miles off, and bears the arms and initials of Henry VIII. and Anne Boleyn. Others are of pure silver, richly chased.

In nearly all the rooms portraits abound. There is the inevitable "Ramsay" of George III., the usual shadowless Elizabeth, inanities by Kneller, and *copies* by people born to blush unseen. Walpole, when he visited this scene of bygone magnificence, enumerates "embroidered beds, embossed silver in vases, dishes, &c.; stiff chairs, and sweet bags lying on velvet tables, richly worked in silk and gold;



loads of portraits, not good, nor curious." This last record is a notable instance of hasty generalization. There are many pictures, both good and curious, and Walpole is simply spiteful when he speaks of the large collection of literary portraits, such as those of Dryden, Pope, Congreve, Wycherley, Prior, Killigrew, and others which adorn the Dining Room, as "proper enough in *that* house; for the first Earl wrote a play, and the last was a poet, and, I think, married a player!" The Brown Gallery is lined with historical portraits—chiefly of the reigns of Henry VIII., Elizabeth, and James I.—which are mostly copies, and Walpole was thus able to say of them, "that they seem to have been bespoke by the yard, and drawn all by the same painter." Amongst them, however, is a good Holbein (Ortelius the geographer); "Charles II.," Lely; "Catharine of Arragon," Holbein; "the Prince of Orange as a boy," Jansen; and "Cromwell," by Walker; and interesting portraits of Thomas Howard, Duke of Norfolk; Thomas Sackville, Baron Buckhurst; and Queen Anne Boleyn.

The Billiard Room and Leicester Gallery contain portraits of Sir Kenelm Digby—a splendid Vandyke; Sir Thomas More, after Holbein; Surrey, at the age of twenty-nine; Lord Cranfield, first Earl of Middlesex—"the citizen who came to be Lord Treasurer, and was very near coming to be hanged," pungently remarked Walpole; the Countess of Bedford, mother of Lord William Russell, beheaded on the same charge with Algernon Sidney, and for whose loss she

died of grief—one of Vandyke's best portraits, "the drapery skilfully managed, and the hands exquisitely painted." Also, Edward, fourth Earl of Dorset, who fought the sanguinary duel with Lord Bruce, related by Clarendon; an affair which made a great stir at the time, the narrative of which throws a curious sidelight on the social habits of the period. Dorset, then plain Mr. Sackville, grandson of the Lord Treasurer, his elder brother having already succeeded to the title and estates, in consequence of the death of the second Earl only a year after the great Lord Treasurer's decease at the Council-board, was but twenty-three, though married two years or more before this event.

The principals and their seconds, attended by two surgeons, transported themselves to Flanders, and the meeting took place at Bergen-op-Zoom. Mr. Sackville was accompanied by Sir John Heydon, Lord Bruce by Mr. Crawford, an English gentleman, and his man. On meeting, Lord Bruce addressing himself to Sir John Heydon, told him, "that he found himself so behind-hand, that a little of his (Mr. Sackville's) blood would not serve his turn. And that he therefore was now resolved to have him *alone* to satisfy himself and his honour." In spite of the indignant remonstrances of Sir John Heydon at such blood-thirsty intentions, it was agreed that the principals should ride on alone for two miles, attended by the surgeons only, they (the surgeons) being unarmed.

Mr. Sackville afterwards related the manner of this death-fight in the following words: "I being then very mad with

anger the lord Bruce should thirst after my life with a kind of assuredness, bade him alight, which with all willingness he quickly granted ; and there, in a meadow (ankle-deep in the water at least), bidding farewell to our doublets, in our shirts we began to charge each other, having afore commanded our surgeons to withdraw themselves a pretty distance from us ; conjuring them besides, as they respected our favour or their own safeties, not to stir, but suffer us to execute our pleasure ; we being fully resolved (God forgive us) to despatch each other by what means we could. I made a thrust at my enemy, but was short ; and in drawing back my arm, I received a great wound thereon ; but, in revenge, I pressed into him, though I then missed him also ; and then received a wound in my right pap, which passed level through my body, and almost to my back ; and there we wrestled for the two greatest and dearest prizes, honour and life ; in which struggling, my hand, having but an ordinary glove on it, lost one of her servants, though the meanest, which hung by a skin. But at last breathing, yet keeping our holds, there passed on both sides propositions of quitting each other's sword. But, when amity was dead, confidence could not live, and who should quit first was the question ; and, re-striving again afresh, with a kick and a wrench together, I freed my long-captive weapon, which incontinently levying at his throat, being master still of his, I demanded if he would ask his life or yield his sword ? Both which, though in that imminent danger, he bravely denied to do. Myself being wounded,

and feeling loss of blood, having three conduits running on me, began to make me faint ; and he courageously persisting not to accord to either of my propositions, from remembrance of his former bloody desire, and feeling of my present estate, I struck at his heart : but, with his avoiding, missed my aim, yet passed through his body, and, drawing back my sword repassed it again through another place, when he cried, ‘ Oh, I am slain ! ’ seconding his speech with all the force he had to cast me. But being too weak, after I had defended his assault, I easily became master of him, laying him on his back ; when being upon him, I re-demanded, if he would request his life ? But it seems he prized it not at so dear a rate to be beholden for it, bravely replying ‘ He scorned it ! ’ which answer of his was so noble and worthy, as I protest I could not find in my heart to offer him any more violence, only keeping him down, till, at length, his surgeon afar off cried out, He would immediately die if his wounds were not stopped ! ’ Whereupon I asked, ‘ if he desired his surgeon should come ? ’ which he accepted of ; and so being drawn away, I never offered to take his sword, accounting it inhumane to rob a dead man, for so I held him to be. This thus ended, I retired to my surgeon, in whose arms, after I had remained awhile for want of blood, I lost my sight, and withal, as I then thought, my life also. But strong water and his diligence quickly recovered me ; when I escaped a great danger, for my lord’s surgeon, when nobody dreamt of it, came full at me with his lord’s sword, and had not mine with my sword inter-



posed himself, I had been slain by those base hands, although my lord Bruce, weltering in his blood, and past all expectation of life, conformable to all his former carriage, which was undoubtedly noble, cried out, ' Rascal, hold thy hand ! ' So may I prosper as I have dealt sincerely with you in this relation.

“ EDWARD SACKVILLE.

“ Lovain, the 8th September, 1613.”

The cause of this butcherly conflict never transpired : Lord Clarendon, who is supposed to have known it, contents himself by saying that it was “ upon a subject very unwarrantable.”

The Cartoon Gallery, ninety feet in length, contains Myten's excellent copies of Raphael's cartoons, formerly at Hampton Court, besides various portraits, including one by Lawrence. The windows of this gallery are rich in armorial bearings, and besides a remarkably fine pair of silver fire-dogs, there is the Lord Treasurer's chest of office, belonging to Baron Buckhurst, first Earl of Dorset.

But it is in the Crimson Drawing Room the visitor will linger longest. Vandyke, Holbein, Gainsborough, Reynolds, Titian, Del Sarto, and Zuccherro, hold places on the walls. The original “ Count Ugolino in Prison ” (Dante, “ Inferno ”), by Sir Joshua Reynolds, is here, together with the “ Riding Party ” (a fine specimen of Wouvermans), and others of equal interest and excellence.

There are many other rooms we care not to dwell upon.

Charles Lamb was premature when he asked for the china-closet! But the State Bed-rooms are a great feature in the attractions at Knole. There is the King's Bed-room, the Ambassador's Bed-room, the Spangled Bed-room, Lady Betty Germaine's, &c. The "King's" comes first, because it is the oldest, the most expensive, and perhaps the most uncomfortable-looking. The bed, covered with faded gold and silver tissue, lined with richly embroidered satin, is said to have cost £8,000, and the whole furnishing of the room £20,000. The walls are hung with tapestry, the chairs and stools are covered with satin, the tables, the mirrors, and the candle sconces, are all of chased silver. Two ebony cabinets—one of them very curious—also adorn this room, prepared expressly for the visit of James I., and which some one has called "a splendid example of the taste of the age." Let us hope the British Solomon found it less comfortless than it now appears!

Over the fire-place hangs a picture¹ (the only one in the room), by Jansen, of the brothers Coligny, including the Admiral Coligny so foully murdered on the night of the massacre of St. Bartholomew. One recalls, while remembering that England became the vassal of France under these same Stuarts, how different a spirit animated Queen Elizabeth, when, after Coligny's murder, to mark her sense of the dastardly and cruel act, on the arrival of the French Amba-

¹ Since removed to the Great Hall.



dressing-room contains, beside many others, Reynolds' fancy portrait of Peg Woffington as Penelope; Miss Axford, the fair Quakeress so much noticed by George III., and Myten's portrait of the celebrated Anne Clifford, wife of Richard the third Earl of Dorset, who wrecked the estates by his profuse magnificence and unbounded hospitality. Her literary merits were of such a high order that Walpole has included her name among the "royal and noble authors." Her epistolary fame is preserved in the spirited reply she made to Sir Joseph Williamson, secretary of state to Charles II. He had presumed to nominate a candidate for *her* borough of Appleby, when she addressed him in the following laconic and determined style:—"I have been bullied by an usurper; I have been neglected by a court; but I will not be dictated to by a subject; your man shan't stand." Here is also Gainsborough's interesting portrait of Monsieur Campchinetz, an officer of the Swiss guards who escaped the massacre at the Tuileries by concealing himself among the dead bodies of his men. He was a frequent guest at Knole, and well known in London society at the close of the last century. We must pass over the spangled bed-room, and many other

"Spacious chambers joined
By no quite lawful marriage of the arts."

The chamber of Lady Betty Germaine brings us down to a hundred and fifty years ago. It is, however, ancient in character, has a fine piece of tapestry, but is smaller, cosier, and more habitable.

Tired with the survey of all this faded splendour, we sit down in the empty ball-room beneath a curiously carved frieze and stuccoed roof, and look at the portraits which adorn the panelled walls. There is first, a fine Vandyke, the portrait of one of Charles I.'s best cavaliers, — Edward, fourth Earl of Dorset, who fought the duel in Flanders—then past middle age; one very fine portrait by Gainsborough; another by Reynolds, and many other family portraits, in the style that best befits a ball-room—full-length!

How well they look! What a painter was Reynolds! And Romney too! And what beautiful faces they had to paint!

“In bridal coronet
Lace, ribbons, and *coquette*
Falbalà;
Were Romney's limning true
What a lucky dog were you,
Grandpapa!”

How undying they all seem! Can they ever grow old? The lithe, vigorous form—the peach-blossomed cheek—the liquid eye—the rosy lip depicted here, where are they now?

“Heaped over with a mound of grass
Two handfuls of white dust shut in an urn of brass.”

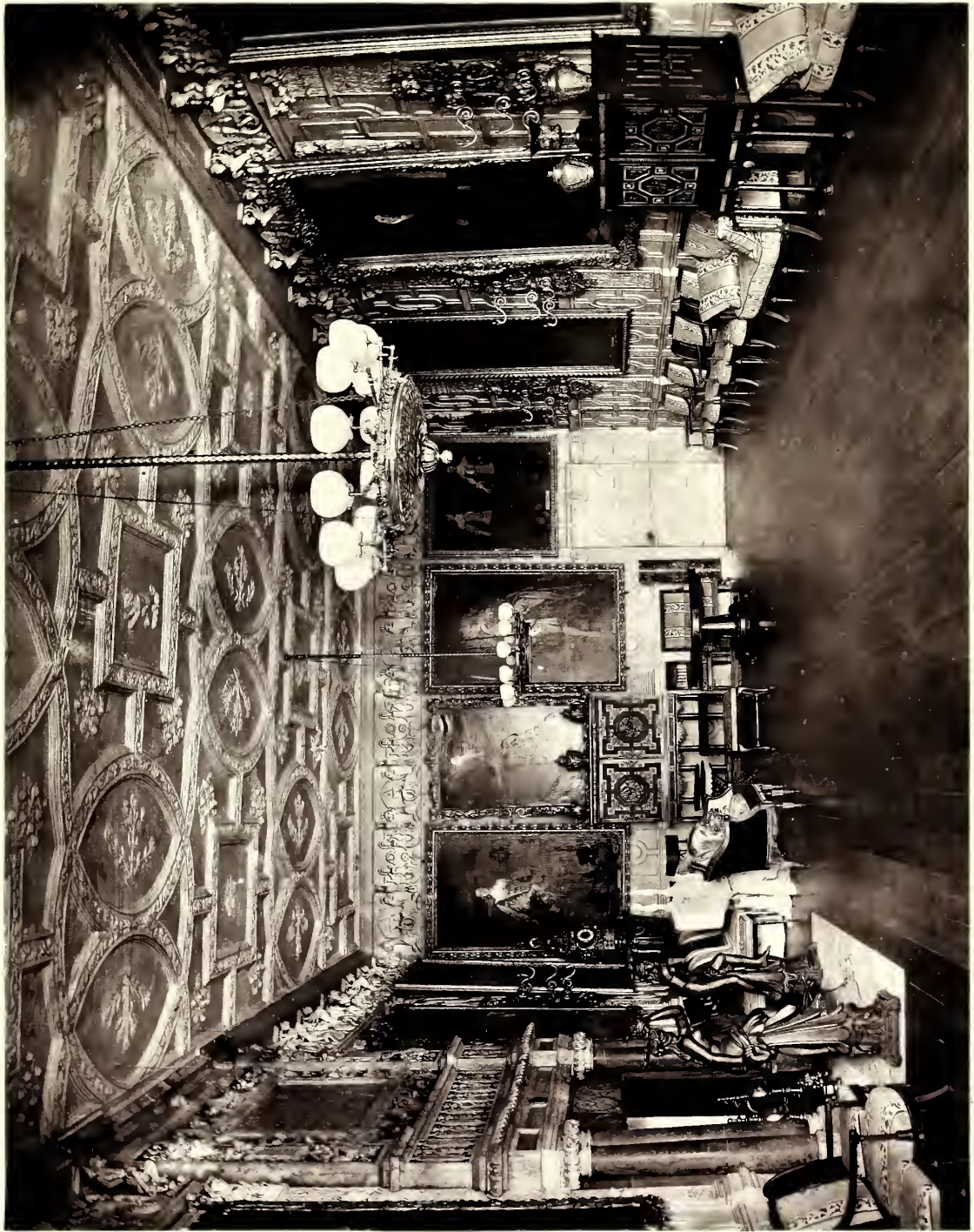
So living and handsome they look upon canvas, that one could almost fancy them stepping out from the frames, bowing low to partners, and dancing a courtly minuet “with ever so airy a tread;” or reclining on the rococo furniture—their furniture—as in days gone by.

While the dance goes on, the logs laid athwart the silver fire-dogs in a little chamber above, shed a ruddy glow upon the tapestried walls, the silver mirror reflects it back with interest, and the steel casket and the silver toilet service, scintillate in the flickering blaze. It is Lady Betty Germaine's dressing-room! the portraits on the walls are some of them portraits of people who may have known the room well. Anne, Countess of Dorset, Pembroke, and Montgomery, and her first husband, the third Earl of Dorset. Others are those of Lady Betty's friends. Here, after the ball, those same faces often chattered away over the warm firelight that delicious half-hour before bed-time.

The air is chill to-day, and a shadow falls across the recess beside the never-lighted fire!

The garden front, which comprises many of these rooms, is by far the most picturesque portion of the exterior of Knole. The mantling ivy has clothed much of it in its own gentle way, and quaint mullioned windows look out across a smooth-shaven lawn upon shady covered walks leading we know not whither.

The Dining Room yet remains to be surveyed, and it is a room that has claims not to be disregarded. The yellow sunlight of an October day falls sadly when all else is fading with the year, and the shades of evening soon blend with the uncertain light, and add a dreamy influence to the memory-haunted apartment. It is a room closely associated with the last Earl of Dorset, Charles Sackville, poet and wit,



patron of men of letters in an age when literature needed patrons, and littérateurs held a less honoured status than in our own time.

“Dorset, the grace of courts, the Muses’ pride,”

is now perhaps best remembered by his verses written at sea in the first Dutch War (1665), the night before the engagement :

“To all you ladies now at land,
We men at sea indite.”

In the vacant chair at the head of the table sat the portly host, who in the evening of life loved to gather round his board the *best* company ; using the word in its larger sense.

A big handsome face, full-blooded, the chin denoting a love of good cheer as well as good company : such is the portrait by Sir Godfrey Kneller. Gathered around him were many of the faces whose representations hang on the walls to-day. John Dryden, first always, and most honoured guest until his death in 1700. Matthew Prior, poet and statesman, with a shrewd judicial face, large decided mouth, and careless attire. Pope could have been scarce twenty when Dryden was yet a visitor here, and his countenance must have then worn more the aspect seen in Jervas’s full-length of him in company with Matthew Blount, now in the National Collection, than the later one. An eager, precocious face, before it became sharp and attenuated, but always a strong face, with a full, not thin lip. Addison’s is a handsome face, with

quick, piercing eyes, but the poet was ever more careful of his attire than bard beseems, and his rich velvet coat in the latest fashion, and well-cared-for wig, conveyed no impression of any familiarity with the midnight oil. Locke's aquiline nose and eagle aspect but half redeemed an acid face, and Waller must have been dead before Pope was old enough to sit at Sackville's table. Few possessed, however, a more thoughtful, high-bred face than Waller, and with no ignoble lines. But among all the men of genius, poets and wits, dramatists and philosophers, who gathered here, there is no handsomer face than that of Congreve, another portrait of whom, by Kneller, may be seen any day in the National Portrait Collection at South Kensington. It shows him in the prime of life—a large, well-formed nose, dilated nostril, beaming eyes, and red full lips—a trifle sensuous.

Wycherley also is here—coarse, pleasure-loving roué, who, having lived through all the profligate days of Charles II., brings with him memories of other and less harmless orgies than those that give a zest to Dorset's table.

Waller was the near relative of John Hampden, and must have had purer recollections. Though living down to the accession of William and Mary, he was twenty years old when Charles I. came to the throne; and his life therefore embraced not only that period, but the whole of the Puritan times and the Restoration. He must always have been the elder at this table, though most of them had lived in the days of Charles I., Cromwell, and Charles II.; the Earl himself

being a lad of twelve when Charles I.'s head fell on the scaffold at Whitehall.

Their mental vision was peopled with scenes of a changeful time; and it is, after all, what we have seen and lived amidst that is most deeply cut in the plastic tablets of memory—all else prior to one's own time falls into its place as "history" common to the race—

"The eternal landscape of the past."

Like men ascending to the earth's surface from a common centre, each generation looks upon a wider horizon; every preceding generation has added another ring to the ever extending circle. With these men, their mental horizon was bounded by the year 1700.

Dorset, the host, had been a favourite with Charles II., to whom his generous disposition, elegant manners, and sprightly wit, and, it must be added, accomplished libertinism, had commended him. Walpole's sarcasm, before mentioned, "that the first Earl wrote a play, and the last Earl was a poet, and, he thought, married a player," had this foundation in fact, that Nell Gwynne had been Dorset's mistress while yet on the stage, and before her acquaintance with the King. Walpole, however, says "he was the first gentleman in the voluptuous court of Charles II., and in the gloomy one of King William. He had as much wit as his first master, or his contemporaries, Buckingham and Rochester, without the King's want of feeling, the Duke's want of principle, or the Earl's want

of thought." There is no doubt he was one of the most generous and munificent patrons of men of letters and genius that ever existed. Dryden, Pope, Addison, Congreve, Wycherley, and Prior all wrote in his praise. Prior he rescued from a vintner's tap, and he gratefully avowed "that he scarcely knew what life was until he found himself obliged by his lordship's favour." Butler owed it to him that the Court tasted his "*Hudibras*." Killigrew was equally indebted; and Dufey, for some years, had apartments at Knole.

We have, then, but to remember the period in which they had lived, to understand what these walls—if walls had eyes and ears—must have seen and heard. It is the close of the seventeenth, and the commencement of the eighteenth centuries, Dorset dying in 1706. The pent-up stream of gross animalism let loose by the Restoration had spent its force to a great extent, and now rolled a smoother but still vicious course. The violent reaction from the repressive tenets of Puritanism, which plunged society into reckless profligacy and debauchery, had exhausted itself, and now sought to veneer its entire worldliness and love of pleasure with a layer of French polish. Manners, conversation, taste, and style were all founded on French models. Ornate and polished manners were assiduously cultivated, and vice, in losing some of its grossness, perhaps lost some of its evil; but the residuum was great, and the improvement was only apparent by contrasting the present with the immediately



preceding generation. The brilliant jest, the sparkling epigram, the witty repartee, were the condiments that enlivened Dorset's social board. Does conversation flag, and the wine-cup fail to inspire?—the host starts some pleasantry. "The company shall try which of them all can write the best impromptu, and Dryden—glorious John—shall be the judge." Emulous of proving their wit and breeding, they apply themselves eagerly to the task, while Dorset merely scrawls his own attempt carelessly on a piece of paper, and hands it to Dryden. When all have finished, and the papers are collected, Dryden rises, and in a few words expresses a belief that it would be useless to read them, as no one will doubt, when he hears it read, but that the Earl's is the best. It runs thus :—

"I promise to pay Mr. John Dryden, on demand, the sum of £500.

"DORSET."

In such light pastimes did the poets and wits of a by-gone day divert themselves. They were all men of the world, priding themselves on their good-breeding and fine tastes and gallantries. Earnest in nothing, literature was with many of them regarded as a mistress with which to dally, but not as a consort to stand side by side with them before the world. "I am not a literary man," said Congreve to Voltaire, "I am a gentleman." It is curious to contrast the tone of these fine gentlemen with Wordsworth's

"Plain living and high thinking."

Affecting always an air of *bon ton*, they are expert in all the amenities of the drawing-room: elegant in their vices and epicures in their immoralities. Wycherley, Congreve, Vanbrugh, and others, had resided in France and affected its style and polish. Amidst all this false glitter and boudoir perfume, exhaled in ode and epigram and classic verse, we seldom see an English background appear—fresh and green, and sweet-scented as the meadow thyme!

The portraits of Gay and Swift help us on our way through the eighteenth century—perhaps the most uninteresting in our annals. From the “Beggar’s Opera” of Gay, we pass on later to Sheridan and his “School for Scandal,” in which, as recently put on the stage, we see the picturesque side, so far as externals go, of an age of fopperies and artificialities.

And so, in thought, we travel onwards, through avenues of clipt yews and prim box, tortured into fantastic semblance of peacocks and dragons, and other hideous monstrosities, no longer seen at Knole, amidst which people played at make-believe with each other, and to which affected manners and stilted verse were the appropriate accompaniments. We never look upon the remains of such garden millinery without thinking of Shenstone and his typical verse, in which this period is so well reflected; when lovers were all swains or nymphs, Colins or Chloes; country clowns, by courtesy, all *shepherds*; and young ladies and gentlemen of the period warbled nightly—

“Shepherds, I have lost my love.”

Shenstone's verse, however, has the charm of melody, to which modern ears are somewhat unaccustomed :—

“ Since Phillis vouchsaf'd me a look
I never once dream'd of my vine,
May I lose both my pipe and my crook,
If I knew of a kid that was mine !
I priz'd every hour that went by
Beyond all that had pleas'd me before,
But now they are pass'd, and I sigh,
And I grieve that I priz'd them no more.”

The portraits of Garrick and Reynolds—the last, chronologically—remind us that the century closed not without some of the noblest contributions to English art, and the stage was graced with actors whose like we may not look upon again : and all this at last ended in Bath pump-rooms—Beaux Nash and Brummel, and the First Gentleman in Europe !

Rather we should say culminated and expired, for the Victorian era marks an entirely new development in the history of man : materially, socially, and intellectually.





HAMPDEN HOUSE.



ON high ground among the quiet Chiltern hills stands an ancient mansion, half-hidden on its most picturesque side by some magnificent cedars of uncommon size and beauty, the growth of centuries. Standing amidst almost untrodden ways, quite apart from the main roads that cross Buckinghamshire, its whereabouts is scarcely known to the outer world. Enclosed in its own ancient woods, it rests in shadowy seclusion, "the world forgetting, by the world forgot."

In immediate proximity, overshadowed by the lonely house, stands a little church. It is of the usual type of English village churches—some grass-grown graves, a few headstones, not many, around it. It seems strange to see a lonely mansion and church in such close fellowship. There is no hamlet near, or indication of other use, and so it would seem as though the one was entirely for the use of the other, —literally to each successor, "the house where he lived,

the chamber in which he died, and the grave where he is laid." Always in view, the one serves as a perpetual *memento mori* to the other. One steps hatless across the few yards of lawn, through the sweet-blossoming flower-beds, and enters the little chancel to see on the wall a time-stained tablet inscribed with a beautiful epitaph, written by a bereaved husband to the memory of a tenderly loved wife. Close beside it is another grave without memorial, but one that needs no

"Storied urn, or animated bust,"

for it is emphatically that of a man whose name "smells sweet and blossoms in the dust." It is the grave of John Hampden! Yes, this old mansion shrouded in ancient woods was the home of one who bore a name amongst the purest and most unsullied inscribed on the roll of history.

Nor was he unlovely in his life, but a man of noble presence, tall and stately in form, wearing, after the fashion of his time, long curling hair drooping over the shoulders. When the grave was opened years ago by his historian, Lord Nugent, his body was found in such a perfect state that it is said the picture on the staircase was known to be his from the likeness, though the body was at first taken for a woman's from the exceeding length and beauty of the hair.¹

¹ Minute and copious details of the opening of Hampden's grave may be found in the Journals of the time (July 21st, 1828). It was carried out with much formality, in the presence of various local authorities and other gentle-

John Hampden was the representative of one of the oldest families in the kingdom: one that traced its descent in an unbroken line from Saxon England. The estate around was bestowed upon Sir Baldwyn Hampden by Edward the Confessor, and it had the good fortune to escape all mutilation by the rapacity of the Norman princes; but there is a local tradition, not supported by fact, that later, one of the Hampdens only made his peace with the Crown, on the score of a blow given to the Black Prince in a dispute at tennis, by forfeiting three valuable manors: Tring, Wing, and Ivengo. The Hampdens often figure in English history, and the only daughter of the one who is described at the meeting on the Field of the Cloth of Gold as "Sir John Hampden of the Hill"—Sibel Hampden—became the ancestress of William Penn, the founder of Pennsylvania. A daughter of the Sidneys—Elizabeth—had some generations back married a John Hampden (County Bucks), so it would seem that on the maternal side the blood of the Sidneys, the Penns, and the Hampdens mingled.

We return to the house with its portals lying open to the soft summer winds, bearing a tribute from sweet-scented clover fields and hedgerows decked with the wild English rose. What has been the abode of such a man, says his

men. Lord Nugent suppressed the particulars in his work, "Memorials of John Hampden," 1831, on account of there being certain doubts as to the identity of the remains that were the subject of this curious examination.

historian, Lord Nugent, can never be but interesting from the associations belonging to it. No one surely can visit the residence of Hampden and not do justice to the love which its master bore it, and to the strong feeling which could lead him from such a retirement to the toils and perils to which he henceforth entirely devoted himself.

It has not escaped the restorer's hand, and its fine oak carvings have all at some period been covered with ghastly white paint. But it is a veritable antique, yet full of "sweetness and light." Remains of various styles, from early Norman to the Tudor period, may be traced through debasing innovations of later periods. The rays of the morning sun slant across the brick-floored parlour we first enter, lighting up here and there an antique chair or carved projection. The apartment seems to have been used as a morning-room, —half office, half study, for the library is above,—and for the transaction of business. The table, with inkstand and writing materials, facing the latticed windows, seems by its *entourage* to have been the fitting place for the examination of steward's accounts, and the despatch of such business as may fall to the province of a country gentleman. Some old books lie around —a Bible of the Cromwell family, containing the register of his birth, and that of his brothers and sisters,—and a few other relics.

In this room, A.D. 1636, sat John Hampden engaged in writing, when the Commissioners came to arrest him for the assessment of 3*1s.* 6*d.* for ship-money. Another window looks

towards the piece of land upon which he refused to pay that small rate, which involved a greater principle.

It is easy here to picture to oneself the daily life led by Hampden for many years in this secluded home, so retired, but still within only a few hours' distance of the Court—

“Not wholly in the busy world, nor quite
Beyond it.”

To understand it better, we must go back to 1628, when Charles, having dissolved his last parliament, passionately vowed, with all the impetuosity of his weak nature, as he disrobed himself, that he would never put on those habiliments again. The desperate course of government by prerogative now began, and the exercise of all those measures by which the executive sought to enslave the people.

Then came twelve long years without a parliament! But no state edict can polarize human thought! Hampden retired to this home we see around us, but not to idleness. Those twelve years of retirement were fraught with the gravest results to our race. Year after year passed in quiet study brought matured convictions pregnant with issues of the gravest import. The wisdom that only comes with years—the slowly ripened fruit of thought—were all the results of these years of waiting. His favourite work at this time is said to have been that sad story of strife and bloodshed, Davila's “History of the Civil Wars of France.”

In judging of historical events, it may be doubted if we take sufficiently into consideration the lapse of time between



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each one. In studying the past, as the mind reads on, they seem to follow wave on wave, and we are sometimes apt, though not overlooking the fact, to fail in giving it its due weight, just as in geological science, we have been ever too prone to estimate the changes wrought by Nature as having been accomplished by a prodigality of violence, and a parsimoniousness of time, whereas the exact reverse is now known to have been the case. So in political changes of this period; though suddenly precipitated, the upheaval had been long going on.

We then, to form some idea of this event, have but to picture to ourselves our own times after twelve years elapsing without a meeting of parliament. Men like Pym, Hampden, St. John, and others who formed the brain of the nation, were studying in their retirements the great questions at issue, adding conviction to conviction, and precedent to precedent,

“Until endurance grew, sinewed with action.”

We pass to the long library above, which still exists pretty much as Hampden left it. The worm-eaten chairs that stand around have all secret drawers, which may once have held correspondence that would have been deemed treasonable in those insecure times. From their style they may have been antiques in his day, even as there are brasses in the little church to John Hampdens of a date as long before his time as the patriot's is from ours.

Picture the long evenings spent in this room over these books, after mornings among the greenwood glades and high breezy Chiltern hills. From the library windows, which occupy the whole range of the front, the eye rests upon yet another of those peerless prospects of English park scenery that time alone can bring to perfection. In the immediate foreground stand noble specimens of the copper-beech, limes, balm of Gilead firs, juniper, and English oak. In the park is a majestic avenue, called the Queen's Gap, cut to make an entrance for Queen Elizabeth on her visit to his grandfather, Griffith Hampden.

The Chilterns at Great Hampden are here and there broken by wooded dells, amongst which the beech tree appears to be indigenous. The hills were all once so covered with beech woods as to be impassable. Many of them were cut down by the Abbot of St. Albans, because of the shelter they afforded to thieves and banditti who abounded in these hills. To such an extent did they carry on their depredations, that the office of "Steward of the Chiltern Hundreds" was created for the purpose of protecting the inhabitants. The duties of such a post have, of course, long since died out; but it has been found convenient to retain the nominal office, because of the existence of the rule that members of the House of Commons cannot resign their seats except by the acceptance of an office under the Crown.

On the north side, where the Hampden woods terminate, a huge white cross, cut in the chalk, sprawls over the bare

hillside—so large as to be visible to all the country round. It is called the White Leaf Cross, and is said to have been formed as a memorial of the last battle of the ancient Britons with Hengist and Horsa, which is known to have been fought over the plains of Risborough and Saunderton below. The Saxon princes are said to have planted their victorious standards on the ridge adjoining, to recall their men from the pursuit.

How often Hampden must have paced this long gallery, meditating upon the signs of the times, or sitting down to write those letters to his friend, Sir John Eliot, confined in the Tower, to whose sons he was guardian, and which give us such glimpses of the man! “In looking at his life,” writes Mr. Forster, “these letters are of the last importance; the feelings they disclose enable us to judge his latter years by a true test, and to discern the secret of his bold endeavours there—the end to which he looked in all his patriotic toils and engagements—unbounded love and gentleness to mankind.”

“It is enough to add here, that besides in the thought of that great person’s (Eliot’s) sufferings having served the cause that was dearer to him than happiness or life, the sorrow with which we contemplate them has some redemption in the delightful view which they have been the means of handing down to us of the character of Hampden, and his generous and gentle feeling. We find in him at this trying period nothing wanting in the qualities that command respect and

love for their amiable and exalted nature. He appears to us, the guardian of the two young Eliots, devoting his great mind to their improvement, while their natural guardian under Charles's detested rule is wearing out his days in the Tower; leaving nothing undone for their welfare, and disclosing throughout his correspondence with their father, a fine fancy; a heart of honour full, as of gentleness; of true wisdom and scholarship, as of kindness and intrepidity. This it was which made Hampden a patriot—his love for all men and for all good and graceful things." Nothing can exceed the sagacity and penetration of some of the literary criticisms, or the delicacy and beauty of the language in which they are expressed.

Eliot has sent him some MSS. he is engaged upon. Hampden begs he will send him the remainder when it is finished, observing:

"That I did see is an exquisite nosegay, composed of curious flowers, bound together with as fine a thredd. But I must in the end expect honey from my frend. Somewhat out of these flowers digested, made his owne, and givinge a true taste of his own sweetnesse, though for that I shall await a fitter time and place. The Lord santify unto you y^e sowrenesse of yo^r present estate, and y^e comforts of yo^r posterity.

"Yo^r ever y^e same assured frend

"JO. HAMPDEN.

"April 4th 1631."

Noble Sr

'Tis well for me that letters
 cannot blush, else you would easily make
 me guilty. I am ashamed of so long a
 silence and know not how to excuse it,
 for as nothing but business can speak for
 me, of with Linda I have many advocates
 so can I not tell how to call any business
 greater than holding an affectionate cor-
 respondence with so excellent a friend. My
 only confidence is I plead at a bar if
 lower, where ~~absolution~~ ^{absolution} an much more frequent
 than censures. Sure I am that conscience
 of right doth not accuse me; though
 evidence of fact doth. I would add more
 but ye entertainment of a stranger friend
 calls upon me; and our other unavoidable
 occasion; hold me excused therefore. Dear
 friend. and if you vouchsafe me a little
 let me beg of you to teach me
 some thrift of time; that I may employ
 more in your service who will reward

Your faithful servant
 & affectionate friend
 E. J. Simpson

Hampd.
 March 24
 1634

Commend my service to
 your children if not gone
 to his colony.

non per
 28 8 1718

On another occasion he writes, "I have looked upon y^t rare piece ownly with a superficial view ; as at first sight to take y^e aspect and proportion in y^e while ; after, with a more accurate eye, to take out y^e lineaments of every part, * * * * yet (to show my ingenuity rather than witt). Would not a lesse modell have given a full representation of that subject ? not by diminution, but by contraction, of parts ? I desire to learn ; I dare not say. The variations upon each particular seem many ; all, I confess, excellent. The fountaine was full ; y^e channell narrow ; y^t may be y^e cause ; or that the author imitated Virgill, who made more verses by many than he intended to write. To extract a just number, had I seen all his, I could easily have bidd him make fewer ; but if hee hadd badd mee tell which he should have spared, I had bine apposed. So say I of these expressions, and that to satisfy you, not mysele, but that, by obeying you in a command so contrary to my own disposition, you may measure how large a power you have ouer

"JO. HAMPDEN.

"Hampden, June 29th 1631."

The felicitous expressions they contain are not more captivating than the glimpse we obtain of the perfect friendship that warmed into life these delicate flowers of fancy which blossomed and faded so long ago. There is a visible personality in old letters, when their authenticity is absolutely certain. It is almost like an interview with the dead :—they

are the flotsam and jetsam of the past—a message from Time's grey sea. We gaze on them and, like the paleontologist from a small fossil, reconstruct in imagination the outward semblance of the writer—the hand that traced the antique characters—the eye that led the hand through the dim labyrinths of the time-stained page—the thoughtful brow that once bent over the faded sheet, and framed into words the winged thoughts that came welling up more than two hundred years ago.

But these letters have a greater charm for us than is contained in the fine fancy and erudition they display. The human heart should beat for two. In a gloomy apartment in the old Tower by Thames-side we see a worn, weary face bending over these letters dated from this Buckinghamshire mansion—letters never meant for any other eye than that of the recipient. They are the only rays of sunlight that penetrate there. The strongly lined face relaxes over the familiar handwriting that looks so strange to us, and the eye grows soft and moist, and emotions are awakened with which a stranger may not intermeddle. Is there not sometimes affection as strong as the marital tie? “Small spheres hold small fires!” We may not measure all men with village scales!

No opportunity such as those to which heaven joins great issues, good or bad, for human kind seemed to arrive; and Lord Brook,—next to Eliot, his closest friend from boyhood, to whom his attachment was strengthened by entire and con-

stant agreement and association in public life—having prepared a retreat from the evil time upon which they had fallen, in the province of Connecticut called Saybrook, Hampden determined upon leaving a country which appeared to be falling a prey to despotism and violence, and becoming hopelessly enslaved. Fortunately for our liberties, this determination was not carried out—there was work for him to do here, the opportunity so slow in ripening was nearer than he suspected.

So the years rolled slowly away. After his trial as to the right of the king to levy ship-money, never to be applied to ships, during which trying time he had displayed such rare temper and modesty as to elicit the admiration and respect of even hostile observers, a perceptible change was gradually appearing in Hampden, but it was only the infusion of a sterner and more resolute spirit necessary for the work he had to fulfil. He had taken higher ground, and began to see there could be no temporising; the disease was organic, and the axe alone could do its work on the tree of corruption.

It is difficult to understand the distinction which made such acts exercised by Charles utterly wrong and tyrannical, when the Tudors had committed other despotic decrees with impunity; but their government was essentially a popular government though under the forms of despotism, and many excesses were easily condoned by a people proud of the national spirit and high and fiery blood of its magnificent princes. Though the legal checks were feeble, observes

Macaulay, the natural checks were strong. Elizabeth's power consisted mainly in the willing obedience of her subjects, in their attachment to her person and to her office, in their respect for the old line from which she sprang, in the sense of general security which they enjoyed under her government. These were the means, and the only means, she had at her command for carrying her decrees into execution, for resisting foreign enemies, or for crushing domestic treason. She understood her people, which the Stuarts never did : a high-spirited race, with a fierce inborn love of freedom,—a people that might be led, but would never be driven. When Elizabeth solicited the City of London for ships and men and money for the defence of her kingdom against the preparations making by Spain, the question was answered by another as to what the Queen's Highness expected of them. The reply was, fifteen ships and five thousand men and equipments. Two days after, the city in response "humbly intreated the Council, in sign of their perfect love and loyalty to Queen and country, to accept ten thousand men and thirty ships completely equipped."

"No one in that age," writes the author of "Statesmen of the Commonwealth," "not even Pym himself, looked at the great question of resistance to tyranny on larger or more extended grounds, or in a more philosophic spirit. It was Hampden who first dared to anticipate a broader field of warfare than the floor of the House of Commons, and to prepare himself for a more real struggle."

At last that word that had been proscribed for twelve years was again heard throughout the land, and Charles in his financial extremity resolved to summon a parliament once more. The time for action had come. Hampden abandoned his retreat and sat for the county of Buckinghamshire. The "long mechanic pacings to and fro" were over, but "the set grey life and apathetic end" were not to be his. Except at short intervals, he returned to his beloved retreat no more. Events crowded too thickly, great issues were at stake, and John Hampden had become one of the acknowledged leaders of the people.

When the Long Parliament met, Hampden again sat for Bucks. From that memorable parliament there is scarcely a privilege of good and safe government now enjoyed by the people that does not date its commencement. "Upon the faces of all these men," wrote Clarendon, "there was a marvellous elated expression," and it may well have been so.

Soon came Charles's attempt to arrest the Five Members: an attempt egged on by his French wife, Henrietta Maria, with the words "*Allez! poltron! Go, pull these rogues out by the ears. On ne me renvoyez jamais!*"

Hampden's bearing at this crisis exhibited all the best qualities which distinguish the high-bred English gentleman: calm, courteous, self-possessed, yet with an irresistible will and energy that silently influenced all who came within his reach. When he rose to speak in the House, all listened with rapt attention. His speech was singularly impressive,

and his manner added weight to his words. His speech displayed the settled convictions and large views of men and things which had come to him during the years of studious retirement at Great Hampden. Men noted the change in the look and tone of Hampden at this period, and spoke of it as sudden. It was scarcely so, though the mildness had for ever passed away, and a fixed, stern purpose marked the brow where the gentler influences of high culture, pursued for its own sake, had before predominated; but if any one truth is more apparent than another at this period of England's history, it is the slowness of the growth of the conviction in men's minds that no dependence could be placed on the king's good faith or truthfulness. Until the very last scene of the tragedy, men—in spite of every evidence to the contrary, in spite of repeated acts of treachery, deliberate falsehood, and broken pledge—were willing to trust him and try him once more. Even towards the end, when a prisoner with Fairfax, overtures of re-settlement were made to him, as if he had not hopelessly shown that no reliance on his plighted word could be placed, and yet men were found ready to believe and trust him again. It testifies strongly to the fact that truth was so much the characteristic of the English nation, that such utter falsity was to it simply inconceivable. The refractive power of the material of which Charles's mind seemed constituted was extraordinary. A promise ordinarily regarded as a deliberate and solemn pledge, when refracted through the prism of such a mind, underwent instant decom-

position and dispersion. Mr. Gardiner, in his admirable work forming a critical examination of the history of England during the first half of the seventeenth century, ingeniously attributes this faithlessness to mental rather than moral causes.

Hampden, with the sagacity that distinguishes a born leader and governor of men, saw before most others the hopelessness of any compromise with a man of Charles's weak and vacillating and at the same time treacherous and tyrannical character. He saw it mattered little what should be the incident or step, or particular breach of our liberties that precipitated matters,—the struggle must come, or all that made his country dear to him or to his countrymen, must go down before the will of the Stuart.

The country was now fairly roused to a sense of the importance of the principle at stake. Passing over the grand high-handed course taken by the City of London, and the protection afforded to Hampden and the Five Members lodged in Coleman Street, memory dwells on that brilliant January day, 1642, when the City carried out their triumphant escort of the Five Members back to their seats at Westminster along the water-way of the Thames. The mind lingers over the picture presented by the Thames covered with boats, and its bridges and banks lined with thousands upon thousands of spectators on that memorable winter's day. The largest and richest of the City Companies' barges were manned by volunteer sailors, and, carrying ordnance and

lighted matches, awaited the embarkation of the Sheriffs accompanied by the City Guard. Amidst countless flags and brilliant colours, the discharge of ordnance, the shouts of the excited populace, and the blare of trumpets,—Pym, Hampden, and his colleagues returned to the scene of their dangers and their triumphs.

The Speaker and the members of the House stood up as the Five entered and took their accustomed places. The instant after, all rose, and while Hampden and the others stood uncovered, Pym tendered in most earnest terms their hearty thanks to the City of London.

That night Charles, accompanied by his family, retired to Hampton Court, never to return but as a prisoner.

Thus far have we reached in the progress of events associated with Hampden, but which had their origin farther up the stream, and were to some extent the inevitable legacy of the foolish James I.; events that in the end overwhelmed his unfortunate but not less guilty son, extinguished for ever in England the divine right of kings, nine-tenths of the prerogatives, and all the monopolies and benevolences and other modes of extortion which the Stuarts had inherited from the Tudor dynasty. From the moment when the sole right of the House of Commons to tax the nation was established by the Bill of Rights, and when its own resolve settled the practice of granting none but annual supplies to the Crown, the House of Commons became the supreme power in the State.

And so the civil war began. Charles reared his standard at Nottingham, and men chose their respective sides in the coming struggle. Strange it is to note how little family ties influenced their choice, or in many cases political principle. We see Algernon Sidney fighting on the parliamentary side; on the other side, his uncle, Henry Percy, Queen Henrietta's favourite cavalier; and all the Percys, Sidney's mother, and her sister Lucy Carlisle—the friend of Stafford and afterwards of Pym, whose supreme beauty has been sung by every poet from Waller to Carew—were the children of the Wizard Earl so unjustly confined in the Tower during all his best years by Charles's father. Brothers fought on opposite sides, friend against friend, and neighbour against neighbour, and some on both sides alternately. The venerable sacredness of antique institutions—simply because they were antique—influenced others, and old associations proved too powerful for many of those who were well advanced in years; while in many other instances the gaiety, the splendour, the inlaid armour, the braided love-lock, and the glittering badge, dazzled the eyes and carried away captive the immature fancies of the young.

The people as a body were much influenced by the widespread fear of Roman Catholicism. If they feared the King, they feared the Pope of Rome more. The Queen's friars, her chapel in the Strand, her avowed predilections, and her Popish followers, all kept alive a feeling of anxiety and distrust, and the nation was ever ready to believe that "Catho-

lique hands itched to cut Protestant throats." And as regards Charles, apart from his acts, there was no affinity between his nature and that of the average Englishman, and alienation is the inevitable result of marked dissimilarity of character.

Here, amidst his own beautiful Chilterns, and quiet Buckinghamshire fields and plains, dotted over with brown hamlets, peaceful homesteads, and clustering cottages, such as we see around us to-day, Hampden first published his ordinance to marshal the militia of his native county. The parishes and hundreds into which it is divided, mustered at their market houses, with their leaders at the head, to march forth for training. At first, in the dearth of all the ordinary implements of war, arms and accoutrements of the most grotesque fashion left the walls where, for the first time, since the wars of the Roses, they had hung as hereditary trophies, in the manor house, the yeoman's farm, and the peasant cottage. Here at his own expense Hampden raised his famous regiment of green-coats, who bore at their head in many a fight his well-known standard inscribed "*Vestigia nulla retrorsum.*" The man of thought became merged in the man of action, and even as he was in the first skirmish, so he was present at the first great pitched battle at Edgehill, that battle-field where Charles for the first time found himself confronted by the thick and sombre masses of the army of the Parliament of England.

History has preserved the eloquent but mendacious speech made on that occasion to his officers in his tent, before

he rode down the line clad in a beautiful suit of steel armour, and over it a black velvet mantle, artistically disposed, and adorned with the glittering star and George. "Never did Charles I.," writes Mr. Forster, "seem so respectable as when about to shed the blood of the bravest and most conscientious of his subjects." He also addressed the soldiers and spoke of the love he bore the whole kingdom; but at the same time lost not the opportunity of ventilating his doctrine of divine right, declaring himself "God's substitute and supreme governor under Christ." The life and example of Him whose name he had no scruples about allying with unchristian acts, teach, if anything, that God never gives divine rights but He gives the divine nature also.

But Charles's mental vision was ever in a condition of spherical aberration—an infirmity partly hereditary; and near objects, such as his own kingly prerogatives, assumed exaggerated and distorted proportions, while distant ones, the privileges of the people, were reduced to the size of figures and objects reflected from the surface of a convex mirror.

Very different were the terms in which Old Major-General Skippon addressed his men on a similar occasion, "Come my boys, my brave boys, let us pray heartily, and fight heartily. I will share the same fortunes and hazards with you. Remember the cause is for God, and for the defence of yourselves, your wives, and children. Come, my honest brave boys, pray heartily and fight heartily and God will bless us!"

On the other hand, the best and bravest amongst the Royalists, Spencer, Falkland, Verney, and others, have recorded their misgivings or want of assurance in the righteousness of their cause, and with regard to a great portion of the remainder Dr. Ed. Symmons in a "vindication of Charles I.," published in 1647, says, "Never any good undertaking had so many unworthy attendants, such horrid blasphemers, and wicked wretches as ours hath had. I quake to think, much more to speak, what mine ears have heard from some of their lips."

Events hurry on, we must pass over all those not intimately connected with our subject. Nothing could exceed the wonderful and untiring energy of Hampden and Lord Brook. Wherever need pressed, or fighting was to be done, they were always to the fore, and both fell in this unnatural war.

After the fall of Reading, Essex, instead of advancing on Oxford as Hampden vigorously urged him, relapsed into inactivity, and his soldiers were becoming disorganized, and discipline was relaxed to such an alarming extent, that the House of Commons sent him a remonstrance. In reply to this he wrote on May 24th, what D'Ewes describes as "a very insolent letter." Whitelocke animadverted on the terms employed, but the House found it necessary to endure Essex's conduct patiently for the present.

The Earl of Essex was the son of Elizabeth's unfortunate favourite, and the husband of the infamous Countess of

Somerset. With all his father's popular qualities he had the same jealous temper, and impulsive disposition, and excessive self-appreciation. A sincere worshipper of honour, he was far too keenly sensible of the slightest apparent derogation from it; and when his acute feelings were thus affected, he often in its vindication sacrificed the dignity essential to its true preservation, and descended into petty personal altercations. These instances of his wayward, self-tormenting spirit in his communications with the Parliament, forcibly recall to mind the quarrels and reconciliations of his father and Queen Elizabeth.

Meanwhile, the officers of his army renewed their efforts to rouse the earl to more speedy action, in a remarkable letter, signed by Art. Haselrige, Jo. Hampden, Tho. Ballard, and others. Essex at last moved from Reading to Thame, ten miles from Oxford. Here he dispersed his forces with very little regard to their communications, and with less watchfulness over the movements of the enemy, and sat down once more.

The pages of history have preserved the records of the great events of this eventful time, and writers, with widely opposite views and party bias, have presented and represented the same facts in a more or less trustworthy manner. Hampden's connection with them is fast approaching its termination, and we propose to confine our pen to the last two days of Hampden's career.

It is the 17th of June, 1643. The head-quarters of

the Parliamentary army, under Lord General Essex, are at Thame; those of the Royalists at Oxford. The distance between them is ten miles. Standing nearly midway on Forest Hill, four miles or more from Oxford, you might have commanded a view of both. Forest Hill has memories of its own. Precisely at this time—although the exact day is not ascertainable—amidst all the turmoil of civil war, Milton was married in the little church here to his first wife, Mary, daughter of Richard Powell, Justice of the Peace at this place. Professor Masson, in his exhaustive work, has suggested that as no registry appears in the parish records, the marriage may have been solemnized at Oxford; but the disclosures made at a recent trial of the manner in which these records were kept in bygone days—they were sometimes entered all in a lump, once or twice a year, from memory—would, perhaps, account for the omission. Or the registry may, in those troubled times, have been purposely left for the present; Powell, as a Royalist, having bestowed his daughter's hand on a Parliamentarian, and being localized between two stools, had some difficulty in preserving a safe neutrality. It seems scarcely probable that, considering Oxford was swarming with Royalist soldiers and dissolute courtiers, he would take his daughter there to unite her to John Milton. From the top of Forest Hill there is a most extensive prospect on all sides. Milton gathered here, though they were elaborated at Horton, most of the materials and images for his two poems, the "Allegro" and "Penseroso:" those rich mosaics, one

glowing with life and colour, the other a harmony of tenderest tones. One bright with

“Russet lawns and fallows gray,
Where the nibbling flocks do stray ;
Meadows trim, with daisies pied,
Shallow brooks, and rivers wide.
Towers and battlements it sees,
Bosom'd high in tufted trees,
Where perhaps some beauty lies,
The Cynosure of neighb'ring eyes.”

The other, where

“Philomel will deign a song
In her sweetest, saddest plight,
Smoothing the rugged brow of night.
Sweet bird that shunn'st the noise of folly
Most musical, most melancholy !

* * * * *

But let my due feet never fail
To walk the studious cloisters pale,
And love the high embowed roof
With antique pillars massy proof,
And storied windows richly dight
Casting a dim religious light.”

These two poems have long ago been cut up into little stars, which more than all others shine out in fragmentary fashion from countless pages scattered up and down throughout the whole range of English literature.

Essex left two regiments exposed at Chinnor and Wycombe. The watchful eye of Hampden noted the danger, and knowing so well the country, saw that by a raid

from Oxford, taking a circular route avoiding Thame, these regiments might be cut off. Hampden, on the preceding day, strongly represented to the tardy Essex the danger to which this part of the line was exposed, and urged the necessity of strengthening it by calling in the remote pickets from Wycombe. He knew all the passes of the county, and that the raid could be made. It is intersected in the upper parts by woods and deep chalky hollows, and in the vales by deep brooks and green lanes; the only clear roads being along the foot of the hills from east to west, and these roads, then very good, by the two old Roman highways, called the Upper and Lower Icknield Ways. He had, moreover, expected some great operation might be attempted over this district, and an effort made to force the posts round Thame, and thus turn the whole eastern flank of the army.

A new and unexpected source of apprehension and danger had been added to all this from the desertion of Urrie to the King at Oxford, carrying with him, necessarily, complete information and experience of the disposition and strength of all the quarters lying between Oxford and the capital. Urrie was a Scotchman, and a mere mercenary soldier of fortune, who had learned his profession under Gustavus Adolphus, the King of Sweden, and had much experience abroad as a cavalry officer. He was a licentious, unprincipled scoundrel, but an able, intelligent officer in the field. At the beginning of the war he sold his services to the Parliamentarians, and did good service at Edgehill; but as they

did not value him at the high rate he set on himself, he went over to the king. After Marston Moor, he got tired of the king's service, deserted to the parliament again, and told Lord Manchester all Charles's plans. Finally, he changed sides a third time, landed with Montrose in 1649, and was hanged at last.

Weighted with a presentiment that any movement Essex might make would come too late to avert the threatened danger, Hampden's active and resolute mind was not satisfied with having done all that was possible to awaken the commander to a sense of the perilous position of affairs, but he decided on sleeping that night at Watlington, in order that he might be close at hand in case of need.

So Hampden rests to-night at Watlington, a village seated by the side of a little stream immediately under the Chiltern Hills. Before him this June evening lies the amphitheatre enclosed by the Chilterns in which the village of Chinnor—the weak point—is placed, and Tetsworth, another village, through which the foe must pass. The landscape is full of beauty, it may not be of the highest order, but to eyes that remember it in association with happy days it is peerless. Scarce a mile away on the right stands the old manor house of Pyrton, where Hampden in days gone by had wooed and won in youth's golden prime the wife to whose gentle memory was written the epitaph still borne on the walls of Hampden Church. Overlooking this amphitheatre on the highest point of the Chiltern Hills above stands the church of Stoken

church, from whence the way descends by a steep road into the Vale of Oxford. The beech woods of Stokenchurch are famous for a wealth of wild flowers, including some of the rarest of their tribe. The musk orchis, the butterfly orchis, the bird's-nest orchis, and the whole tribe that love a chalky soil; the broad-leaved as well as the white-leaved helleborine, and the mountain madwort. And on this evening the soft June air is heavy with odours from woody hollows and stream-fed meads. Beside the streams, the large yellow loose-strife, with circles of golden blossoms and large leaves, grows tall and free; and the purple loose-strife, with its rich green leaves and tall stems encircled by whorls or wreaths of closely-growing purple flowers, gathers in crowds, gracefully bending and waving in the evening breeze. They are the "long-purples" of poor Ophelia's chaplet, which she gathered and hung on a tree ere she was drowned in the weeping brook.

"There is a willow grows aslant a brook,
That shows his hoar leaves in the glassy stream,
There with fantastic garlands did she come
Of corn-flowers, nettles, daisies, and long purples."

These scenes were very dear to Hampden, and full of associations of other days; of happy rambles by woodland path and river-side; of halcyon hours when the heart's deepest springs were first opened up; when all is good that time can bring, and days and nights fall away from us like rose leaves to the ground. And as the brook flows past, Hampden feels,

as in a dream, the sweetness of those years go by, while the softened hills sink to sleep against the gentle sky in the tender violet-hued twilight. He has paid, unknowingly, his last visit to Great Hampden—the shadow of his tall form will fall aslant the evening fields no more—"the Shadow feared of man" already sits and waits. In the mysterious waning light memory may have filled that void with the vision of a well-remembered form: crowned with forest-flowers, and in her hand the lilies gathered in yonder vale—just as of yore.

The short summer night comes at length, and all is hushed. The watch-dog barks as the last loitering yokel from the village alehouse lumbers by, for it is Saturday night, and to-morrow the plough will rest in the furrow, and the mill-wheel cease its monotonous round. But the "incense-breathing morn" will bring with it odours of "villainous saltpetre;" and fire and sword, violence, devastation, and death will disfigure these peaceful scenes. Can anything be pictured less in keeping with this idyllic vale? It is like a group of horsemen from a canvas by Wouvermans, galloping across a broad peaceful landscape by Linnell!

We must now turn to the Royalist headquarters at Oxford, and note what has been doing this long June day in that city of spires and domes and towers. In Oxford one can travel straight back to the middle ages without help or preparation for the journey. The great scene-shifter—Time—has been content here of all places to see many episodes played before the same background. Oxford affects one like Venice or

Ravenna. Other places exhibit, separately, impressive relics of the past, but they are not enough to overpower the dominating impress of modern life; but here, modern life is mastered by antique associations. It is like the men of the age of bronze inhabiting the cave dwellings. But to-day the University City wears an aspect as incongruous as if a flight of falcons had alighted in the nests of the hereditary rooks; the clerical element is swamped by the military; buff coats jostle black gowns, and prayers in Latin and oaths in English form contemporaneous waves of sound. There are still few scenes more picturesque than the High Street seen in full term-time. Enter Christ Church by Town-gate—June 17th, 1643—and the great quadrangle is swarming with cavaliers, and the oaken staircases reverberate with the unfamiliar echoes of armed heels and clattering rapiers. Wolsey's noble hall—just as it exists to-day—saw at the dining-hour Charles I. and his personal staff sitting at the raised dais; below, fierce dissolute faces mingle with those of peaceful professors, gentlemen commoners, and poor sizars. Walk up St. Aldate's, cross the High Street at St. Mary's, and enter New College by old William of Wykeham's noble tower gateway, and you find the beautiful gardens of New College turned into an impromptu drilling-ground for raw levies. Pass on to Magdalen, Rupert's quarters, and walk by the meadow side to grey old Merton College. Merton is the quarters of Queen Henrietta and her suite, and the quiet grounds are fluttering with strange garments. Even All Souls has its guests, amongst others

Thomas Fuller, chaplain to Sir Ralph Hopton's command, and the college is melting down its plate for the king like the rest, willingly or unwillingly.

But there is something more than usual afoot ; men hurry to and fro, the call is sounding, and the renegade Urry is in close conference with Rupert. That raid which ended so fatally on Chalgrove Field has been painted in vivid colours by a distinguished American, Colonel Higginson, and the passage deserves to be reprinted on this side of the Atlantic :—

“ Last night the Canary wine flashed in the red Venice glasses on the oaken tables of the hall ; loud voices shouted and laughed till the clustered hawk-bells jingled from the rafters, while the coupled stag-hounds fawned unnoticed, and the watchful falcon whistled to himself unheard. In the carved chairs lounged groups of revellers, dressed in scarlet, dressed in purple, dressed in white and gold, gay with satins and ribbons, gorgeous with glittering chains and jewelled swords : stern, manly faces, that had been singed with powder in the Palatinate ; brutal, swarthy faces, knowing all that sack and sin could teach them ; beautiful, boyish faces, fresh from ancestral homes and high-born mothers ; grave, sad faces—sad for undoubted tyranny, grave before the greater wrong of disloyalty. Some were in council, some were in strife, many were in liquor ; the parson was there with useless gravity, the jester with superfluous folly ; and in the outer hall men more plebeian drained the brown October from pewter cans, which were beaten flat next moment in hammering the loud

drinking-chorus on the wall ; while the clink of the armourer still went on, repairing the old headpieces and breastplates which had hung untouched since the Wars of the Roses ; and in the doorway the wild Welsh recruits crouched with their scythes and their cudgels, and muttered in their uncouth dialect, now a prayer to God and now a curse for their enemy.

“ But to-day the inner hall is empty, the stag-hounds leap in the doorway, the chaplain prays, the maidens cluster in the windows, beneath the soft beauty of the June afternoon. The streets of Oxford resound with many hoofs ; armed troopers are gathering beside chapel and quadrangle, gateway and tower ; the trumpeter waves his gold and crimson trappings, and blows, ‘ To the Standard,’—for the great flag is borne to the front, and Rupert and his men are mustering for a night of danger.

“ With beat of drum, with clatter of hoof and rattle of spur and scabbard, tramping across old Magdalen Bridge, cantering down the hill sides, crashing through the beech woods, echoing through the chalky hollows, ride leisurely the gay Cavaliers. Some in new scarfs and feathers, worthy of the ‘ show troop,’ others with torn laces, broken helmets, and guilty red smears on their buff doublets ; some eager for their first skirmish, others weak and silent, still bandaged from the last one ; discharging now a rattle of contemptuous shot at some closed Puritan house, grim and stern as its master ; firing anon as noisy a salute, as they pass some mansion where a high-born beauty dwells, on they ride. Leaving

the towers of Oxford behind them, keeping the ancient Roman highway, passing by the low, strong, many-gabled farm-houses, with rustic beauties smiling at the windows and wiser fathers scowling at the doors, on they ride. To the Royalists, these troopers are 'Prince Robert and the hope of the nation'; to the Puritans, they are only 'Prince Robber and his company of rake-shames.'

"Riding great Flanders horses, a flagon swung on one side of the large padded saddle, and a haversack on the other, booted to the thigh, and girded with the leathern bandoleer that supports cartridge-box and basket-hilted sword, they are a picturesque and a motley troop. Some wear the embroidered buff coat over the coat of mail, others beneath it, neither having yet learned that the buff coat alone is sabre-proof and bullet-proof also. Scantily furnished with basinet or breastplate, pot, haqueton, cuirass, pouldron, taslets, vambraces, or cuisses—each with the best piece of iron he could secure when the ancestral armoury was ransacked—they yet care little for the deficit, remembering that, when they first rode down the enemy at Worcester, there was not a piece of armour on their side, while the Puritans were armed to a man. There are a thousand horsemen under Percy and O'Neal, armed with swords, pole-axes, and petronels; this includes Rupert's own lifeguard of chosen men. Lord Wentworth, with Innis and Washington, leads three hundred and fifty dragoons—dragoons of the old style, intended to fight either on foot or on horseback, whence the name they bear, and the

emblematic dragon which adorns their carbines. The advanced guard, or 'forlorn hope,' of a hundred horse and fifty dragoons, is commanded by Will Legge, Rupert's life-long friend and correspondent; and Herbert Lunsford leads the infantry, 'the inhuman cannibal foot,' as the Puritan journals call them. There are five hundred of these, in lightest marching order, and carrying either pike or arquebuse—this last being a matchlock musket, with an iron rest to support it, and a lance combined, to resist cavalry—the whole being called 'Swine (Swedish) feathers;' a weapon so clumsy, that the Cavaliers say a Puritan needs two years' practice to discharge one without winking. And over all these float flags of every hue and purport, from the blue and gold with its loyal '*Ut rex, sit rex,*' to the ominous crimson, flaming with a lurid furnace and the terrible motto, '*Quasi ignis conflatoris.*'

"And foremost rides Prince Rupert, darling of fortune and of war, with his beautiful and thoughtful face of twenty-three, stern and bronzed already, yet beardless and dimpled, his dark and passionate eyes, his long lovelocks drooping over costly embroidery, his graceful scarlet cloak, his white-plumed hat, and his tall and stately form, which, almost alone in the army, has not yet known a wound. His high-born beauty is preserved to us for ever on the canvas of Vandyke, and as the Italians have named the artist '*Il Pittore Cavalieresco,*' so will this subject of his skill remain for ever the ideal of *Il Cavaliere Pittoresco*. And as he now rides at the head of this brilliant array, his beautiful white dog bounds

onward joyously beside him, that quadruped renowned in the pamphlets of the time, whose snowy skin has been stained by many a blood-drop in the desperate forays of his master, but who has thus far escaped so safely that the Puritans believe him a familiar spirit, and try to destroy him 'by poyson and extempore prayer, which yet hurt him no more than the plague plaister did Mr. Pym.' Failing in this, they pronounce the pretty creature to be 'a divell, not a very downright divell, but some Lapland ladye, once by nature a handsome white ladye, now by art a handsome white dogge.'

"And so, riding eastward, with the dying sunlight behind him and the quiet Chiltern hills before, through air softened by the gathering coolness of these midsummer eves, beside clover fields, and hedges of wild roses, and ponds white with closing water-lilies, and pastures sprinkled with meadow-sweet, like foam, he muses only of the clash of sword and the sharp rattle of shot, and all the passionate joys of the coming charge.

"The long and picturesque array winds onward, crossing Chiselhampton Bridge (not to be recrossed so easily), avoiding Thame with its church and abbey, where Lord-General Essex himself is quartered, unconscious of their march; and the Cavaliers are soon riding beneath the bases of the wooded hills towards Postcombe. Near Tetsworth, the enemy's first outpost, they halt till evening; the horsemen dismount, the flagon and the foraging bag are opened, the black-jack and the manchet go round, healths are drunk to successes past

and glories future, to 'Queen Mary's eyes,' and to 'Prince Rupert's dog.' A few hours bring darkness ; they move on eastward through the lanes, avoiding, when possible, the Roman highways ; they are sometimes fired upon by a picket, but make no return, for they are hurrying past the main quarters of the enemy. In the silence of the summer night, they stealthily ride miles and miles through a hostile country, the renegade Urry guiding them. At early dawn they see, through the misty air, the low hamlet of Postcombe, where the 'beating up of the enemy's quarters' is to begin."

It is not yet light ; a faint streak of colour illumines the edge of the horizon. There is no time to spare ; the troopers close their ranks and swoop down like night-hawks on the sleeping village. The small picket of Parliamentary soldiers are, however, on the alert, and quickly forming, secure a retreat westward down the narrow street, with the loss of but few men. Before the startled villagers have half realized the nature of the disturbance the skirmish is over, and Rupert and his Cavaliers have swept rapidly on to Chinnor, the goal of their foray, two miles away. No messenger can hope to ride away over the high hills to Stokenchurch in time to sound the alarm-bell, and the village is surrounded. The larger, strongly built village of Chinnor, with iron chains stretched across its streets, is approached with more caution. Men dismount ; parallel lines of them are stationed behind the houses on each side, and these dispositions made, Rupert and his men rush in, and a desperate hand-to-hand fight is begun.

“In five minutes the town is up. The awakened troopers fight as desperately as their assailants, some on foot, some on horseback. More and more of Rupert’s men rush in ; they fight through the straggling street of the village, from the sign of the Ram at one end to that of the Crown at the other, and then back again. The citizens join against the invaders, the ‘prentices rush from their attics, hasty barricades of carts and harrows are formed in the streets, long musket-barrels are thrust from the windows, dark groups cluster on the roofs, and stones begin to rattle on the heads below, together with phrases more galling than stones, hurled down by women, ‘cursed dogs,’ ‘devilish Cavaliers,’ ‘Papist traitors.’ In return, the intruders shoot at the windows indiscriminately, storm the doors, fire the houses ; they grow more furious, and spare nothing ; some townspeople retreat within the church doors ; the doors are beaten in ; women barricade them with wool-packs, and fight over them with muskets, barrel to barrel. Outside, the troopers ride round and round the town, seizing or slaying all who escape ; within, desperate men still aim from their windows, though the houses on each side are in flames. Melting lead pours down from the blazing roofs, while the drum still beats and the flag still advances. It is struck down presently ; tied to a broken pike-staff it rises again, while a chaos of armour and plumes, black and orange, blue and red, torn laces and tossing feathers, powder-stains and blood-stains, fills the dewy morning with terror, and opens the June Sunday with sin.”

Soon columns of smoke ascend and envelop the whole outlines of this English Bazeilles, obscuring the combatants from view, but the fight is over. Plunder, the greatest attraction for Rupert and his men, must, on any considerable scale, for once be given up, for notwithstanding the victory, their position is one of great danger. It is now broad daylight; the bells of Stokenchurch have long been pealing the alarm; Hampden is straining every nerve to the rescue; and in the distance small detachments and videttes are everywhere seen coming in and concentrating. There are twenty-five miles to be ridden, with jaded horses, and Essex's army lying right between them and safety. And so the perilous retreat begins. There is not a moment to lose, and they rattle on, avoiding highways and swimming rivers with their swords between their teeth. At one point they narrowly missed a treasure-convoy carrying many thousands of pounds from the parliament to Essex for his army. "A poor countryman," wrote D'Ewes, "brought the convoy timely notice, and fortunately or unfortunately they concealed the waggons in the thick woods of the Chilterns." The inevitable delay that would have ensued by their capture, would have been fatal to the retreat, by allowing time for Essex to come up.

On the first alarm of Rupert's raid, Hampden sent off a well-mounted trooper to Lord Essex at Thame for a force to be despatched to intercept the enemy at Chiselhampton Bridge, the only point by which Rupert could re-cross the Cherwell.

He then gathered hastily all the men he could, and placing himself at the head of a troop of horse and some of Gunter's dragoons, galloped off with the view of harassing and impeding the enemy until Lord Essex should have had time to bring up a sufficient force to cut off Rupert's retreat. In early life he had hunted over the whole country, and knew thoroughly every pass in it. It was a question of minutes, Hampden too well knew, and his men, few in numbers but splendid in material, dashed at the enemy here, and worried them there, like pursuing hounds, now retreating at one point, now falling unexpectedly on them at another, growing bolder with increasing numbers, until Percy and O'Neal could no longer hold them in check, and at last Rupert is brought to bay on Chalgrove Field.

Seeing that he must fight, Rupert sent on his infantry to secure the long narrow bridge of Chiselhampton, stretching as it does not only over two branches of the river, but over a low-lying strip of meadow-land where Essex ought to have already been, and drew up his troops beside the high-standing corn of this memorable field.

"It is Sunday morning, June 18th, 1643; the early church-bells are ringing over all Oxfordshire—dying away in the soft air, among the sunny English hills, while Englishmen are drawing near one another with hatred in their hearts—dying away as on that other Sunday eight months ago, when Baxter, preaching near Edgehill, heard the sounds of battle, and disturbed the rest of his saints by exclaiming, 'To the fight!'

But here are no warrior-preachers, no bishops praying in surplices on the one side, no dark-robed divines preaching on horseback on the other, no king in glittering armour, no Tutor Harvey in peaceful meditation beneath a hedge, pondering on the circulation of the blood, with hotter blood flowing so near him : all these were to be seen at Edgehill, but not here." It is not a pitched battle, there are no divisions, no plan of operations, and but one scene. It is like looking at a large drawing by Gilbert ; incident, figures, costumes, colour, atmosphere, everything !

Few manœuvres, less tactics, and no Moltke-like subtleties ; a little chafing and pawing of horses' hoofs, a dropping shot or two, and then all is merged in the wild gallop of the charge. Why describe it ? Who has not seen these scenes countless times on the walls of our water-colour societies ? The plumed hats, the flashing steel, the mad gallop, spurs deep, reins free, blades grasped, heads bent, and the crash comes. Then all is blent in one indistinguishable mass : buff coats and steel corslets, swords and pole-axes, carbines and petronels, surge to and fro, standard-bearers go down, standards are again seized and waved on high, leaders shout for " God and Queen Mary ! " or the Parliamentary watchword " God with us ! " brave deeds are done on both sides, and at length the end comes.

A small force of two troops of Puritan cavalry that appeared late on the field charge Rupert's Cavaliers on the right. They are led by a man in middle life and of noble

bearing ; once seen he cannot easily be forgotten, but seen he will never be again, and for the last time Rupert and Hampden meet face to face. Had Hampden's counsels prevailed, Rupert never would have ventured on this desperate night foray ; had his urgent solicitations been quickly acted upon by Essex, Rupert never would have returned from it. Hampden had united his small force with Gunter's dragoons, and together they determined to dare all in the effort to arrest Rupert's retreat. But their number was far too inconsiderable. In vain does Gunter perish beside his flag ; in vain does Crosse, his horse being killed under him, spring in the midst of battle on another ; in vain does " that great-spirited little Sir Samuel Luke " (the original of Hudibras) get thrice captured and thrice escape, for Hampden, the hope of the nation, is fatally shot through the shoulder with two carbine-balls in the first charge ; the whole troop sees it with dismay ; Essex comes up, as usual, too late, and the fight of Chalgrove Field is lost, and Rupert escapes.

We must leave this picture, painted in the fading colours of a far-off time. Let us leave the noble Hampden, weak and almost fainting, his head drooping and his hands leaning on his horse's neck, riding calmly from the battle-field, and wandering away over his own Chiltern meadows that he loves so well—leave him drooping over his saddle, directing his horse first towards his father-in-law's house at Pyrton, looking up for a moment at that beloved home and making an effort to go there to die, then turning towards Thame, for the enemy lay too

thickly in the other direction, mustering his last strength to leap his tired steed across its boundary brook, and reaching that place fainting with agony. The surgeons dressed his wounds, but there was no hope. A few days spent in letter-writing upon public affairs, urging upon Parliament that military energy which if earlier adopted might have saved his life, and to head-quarters recommending once more that the dispersed forces should be concentrated,—and all is over.

His death made a profound impression throughout the country. We find its full expression in the journals of that time. Even D'Ewes, though no friend of Hampden, gives vent to his indignation at "the fatal improvidence of the earl." His associates in the House deeply resented his untimely death through the carelessness of Essex. Pym in the heat of the moment lost sight of his usual motives of prudence, and penned a hasty letter to the earl, which was adopted by the House and sent in its name, in which he said that people began now to think it more safe to be under the command of the king's army than under his. The earl's spirit took fire at this reprimand, and he replied on the 28th June, expressing great discontent, and with many reproaches offering to give up his command. Had Hampden's life been spared there is no doubt he would have succeeded to the supreme command. The great capacity, the boldness and rapidity of his movements, and the real military genius he had shown, made all the Parliamentary soldiers eager to have him at their head.



A few days more, and the sad funeral procession winds through the Chiltern hills, and across the green meadows to the little church. Crowds of his tenantry and neighbours line the way. His greencoats, who had followed him in every fight, ever pressing closer where they saw his tall form and glittering standard, now escorted his body to the grave ; bare-headed, with arms reversed, and muffled drums and colours, singing in old English fashion as they marched, "that lofty and melancholy psalm in which the fragility of human life is contrasted with the immutability of Him to whom a thousand years are as yesterday when it is passed, and as a watch in the night."





STOKE POGES.



PLEASANT walk across the fields from Slough brings the pedestrian in view of perhaps the most widely celebrated village church in existence; the scene of Gray's "Elegy written in a Country Churchyard." Yonder are "the ivy-mantled tower," "the rugged elms," "the yew-tree's shade," "the turf in many a mould'ring heap," "yon wood," "the nodding beech," and "the brook that babbles by." It might have been written yesterday, so perfect is the *couleur locale*. You see all the materials of Gray's picture at a glance. Then remark with what subtle skill he steeps the whole in an evening atmosphere of exquisite refinement of colour, full of delicate half-tones and tenderest gradations. It is not a sketch, but a finished cabinet picture. Perfect handling, the highest technical excellence, are there; wealth of detail, but each part duly subordinated to the others; firmness of touch, and at the same time the most delicate shading, and all pervaded by a sad grey light that both chastens and subdues.

There is no indifferent drawing to be concealed by lavish colour. Gray had not the rainbow on his palette, and the primaries were his abhorrence. In the elaboration of his subject nothing is omitted. Every passion or emotion that stirs the heart, or kindles a glow of feeling, is touched upon or suggested. Ambition, wealth, "the pomp of power," are set face to face with toil, chill penury, and obscurity. Grandeur, fame, "the paths of glory," and their destination, contrasted with "the lonely joys and destiny obscure" of the nameless poor. Calm sequestered peace with "the crowd's ignoble strife." Knowledge with ignorance, the home affections with the hollow unreality of flattery's honied breath, pride, honour, "hopeless love," and "lonely contemplation," all find a place in this vale of rest.

It is an epitome of human life. All nature is laid under contribution, every fact seized upon and generalized. The hues, the tones, the spirit that hovers around such a landscape are caught up and made subservient to the general aim. "The breezy call of incense-breathing morn," the stubborn glebe, "the drowsy tinklings of the distant fold," are all incorporated in the poem. When a work of art lives as this lives, whatever the voice of detraction may say, there must be contained in it other elements than the superficial and the transitory. The same refrain runs through much of Turner's work; it was the great human truth most visible to him—the labour, the sorrow, and the passing away of men—and to every thoughtful man the air is instinct with

“the still sad music of humanity.” This English classic, this gem of purest ray serene, is another Ecclesiastes attempting once more “the conclusion of the whole matter.” In it by some wondrous alchemy every phase of human passion, joy, or pain, is exhaled and crystallized in immortal verse.

Who has not lingered at eventime in a country churchyard? There is ever a mysterious attraction in the perfect seclusion and hushed quietude of such a scene! There at least is peace—no hurrying to and fro, no buying and selling, no sorrow, nor cold, nor care. Its occupants have all passed through the Valley of the Shadow of Death. Each has taken his chamber in the silent halls. It is us—the living—that Charon’s boat awaits. They have passed through the ordeal of Time’s crucible—and here is the residuum. To young or old there comes that conscription in which there is no purchase of substitutes, and no exemption!

And by day the sunlight falls upon dark yews, cypresses, and willows; by night the wan moonlight makes another picture. The moan of the breeze in spring floats solemnly through its precincts; the dirge of autumn accompanies in slow measures the dead leaves to their rest. The thought of death comes more gently here amid the lingering light.

We glory in the possession of this English gem, whereby every village churchyard is lifted out of the region of the common-place and the material, and converted into a glorified and hallowed spot. All that men hope or fear, the *vanitas vanitatum*—the human shrinking from dumb forgetfulness

—the crushing power of circumstance, are strongly asserted. Every chord that moves, elevates, or subdues, is played upon, and the story of our life from age to age glides by, set to elegiac music.

The choice of time is perfect—the eve that hushes all things to rest, symbol of the closing of life's brief day, would alone serve the purpose. If Melrose should only be viewed by pale moonlight, the Stoke Poges of Gray should be seen in the glimmering light of parting day.

Gray's poem contains the unexpressed thoughts of the whole race on the great subjects of life, death, and eternity, as evoked by the unceasing spectacle afforded in the march and tramp of generation after generation across life's stage.

Burnham Beeches are very near to West-end Cottage, where Gray lived at Stoke Poges. This delightful place was the poet's *al fresco* studio. Here he brought his materials, and day by day in summer time sat under green leaves,

“Beneath the shade of melancholy boughs,”

and read Virgil, or built the lofty rhyme! No Rosalind ever came to disturb him. The forest of Arden was not less visited than Burnham then. Gray writing in 1737 to Horace Walpole says, “I have at the distance of half a mile, through a green lane, a forest all my own; at least as good as so, for I spy no living thing in it but myself. It is a little chaos of mountains and precipices; mountains, it is true, that do not ascend much above the clouds, nor are the declivities quite

so amazing as Dover Cliff; but just such hills as people who love their necks as well as I do may venture to climb, and crags that give the eye as much pleasure as if they were more dangerous. Both vale and hill are covered with most venerable beeches, and other very reverend vegetables, that like most other ancient people, are always dreaming out their old stories to the winds :

‘ And as they bow their hoary tops, relate
In murmuring sounds the dark decrees of fate ;
While visions, as poetic eyes avow,
Cling to each leaf, and swarm on every bough.’

At the foot of one of these squats me, I (*il penseroso*), and there grows to the trunk for a whole morning. The timorous hare and sportive squirrel gambol around me like Adam in Paradise before he had an Eve; but I think he did not use to read Virgil, as I commonly do there.”

This fragment of forest scenery yet preserved to us, known as Burnham Beeches, is worthy of the days of Robin Hood. Green shady lanes lead to it; a broad, open, breezy heath, broken into furzy hillocks, and decked with purple heather, gorze, and fern, fringes it; and a labyrinth of soft grassy paths leads whither you will, but always beneath a roof of leaves and spreading boughs, and chequered sunlight. The huge gnarled trunks are grand, and the moss-grown roots wreath themselves into the most fantastic forms, throwing their long contorted fingers out on every side, scrawling grotesque and undecipherable cuneiform characters

along the green sward, which only the poet or the painter can understand, and translate in poetry of form and colour. The bright sunlight is everywhere caught in the interweaving foliage, and scattered in handfuls of golden drops about the beechen woods—as though Titania had overset a casket of jewels in a quarrel with Oberon !

Other forests and woods have beeches of nobler proportions, but these are peculiar—are quite different from those of Knole, Sherwood, or Windsor Forest. They were all pollarded by Cromwell's soldiers, and the effect has been to throw the vigour of growth into the trunks, which have burst into the wildest and strangest forms.

It was fortunate that Burnham existed within easy reach of Gray. That he sometimes painted from nature is something. That he worked so much from the models of the schools was an error for which his fame has paid the penalty. It may be doubted whether, like others, he would have been stronger just in proportion as he painted more directly from nature. His genius was so entirely of the contemplative order, that he would find here in this narrow circle all the food necessary for its sustenance. More than that would not have been assimilated. Were mankind all of his way of thinking there would be no history to write, and no such episodes to relate as many of those told in these pages. In his own words—

“ Where'er the oak's thick branches stretch
A broader, browner shade ;

Where'er the rude and moss-grown beech
O'er-canopies the glade,
Beside some water's rushing brink
With me the Muse shall sit and think
(At ease reclined in rustic state),
How vain the ardour of the crowd,
How low, how little are the proud,
How indigent the great !

" To contemplation's sober eye
Such is the race of man ;
And they that creep, and they that fly,
Shall end where they began.
Alike the busy and the gay
But flutter through life's little day
In fortune's varying colours drest ;
Brush'd by the hand of rough mischance,
Or chill'd by age, their airy dance
They leave, in dust to rest."

The alembic of Gray's mind would never, under any circumstances, have issued a different product. The passionate utterance that bursts from a full heart, with every faculty raised to a white heat, was not for him. That fusion of fervid thought, intense feeling, and lyric expression, only takes place at a higher temperature than ever flushed the cheek or mantled the brow of Gray. But what he did, he finished to the finger-tips like a true artist, and we owe him thanks for one perfect, swan-like melody.

There are specks on the sun. Gray seemed as one whose technical training had been prolonged until inspiration had been drowned in the study of the forms in which it should be clothed. The perfection and abundance of

the scholastic equipments brought into the field sometimes encumber the free movements of the wearer. It o'er-mastered his communion with nature, and interposed a screen, as it were, so that he seemed to view nature only through the medium of the schools. Nature will not be thus wooed ; it is not enough to visit her occasionally ; but one must go and dwell with her far from the haunts of men, and hear then what she has to say to us—grow familiar with her changeful moods, her stormy passions, and her sudden calms ; the pathos that dwells about the solitary moorland waste ; the lonely mountain tarn ; the restless sea—now smooth or calm—now rocking before the coming storm ; crooning a cradle-song the while, or baring its bosom to the constant moon and stars pursued by darkening clouds, hurrying on in ghostly panic—storm-rent, billowy clouds, as unfettered, wild, and homeless as the sea. Nature will not unfold her deepest secret to one who seeks her merely for illustration. With the love that worships, and the knowledge that comes with love, dwells the understanding of all her changeful forms of beauty, of sadness, and of power ; until they become to us even as personalities. And these mute, so-called inanimate forms of nature that fill our vision from day to day—possess us—form part of us—are they such ? Was the old Greek right ?

Nature, apart from human destiny, never entered into Gray's delineations. Nature, as nature, found no place in the poet's programme.

Gray despised what other men deemed the prizes in life,

less from their innate unsatisfying emptiness, than from the belief that they were not worth the money and toil necessary to the successful pursuit of them. It was not so much the vanity of these earthly things, as the constitutional inertness of his nature, which made him think *le jeu ne vaut pas la chandelle*. From the quiet back-water of his professorship, he could, as a bachelor, regard the broken water outside complacently, and talk of the ardour of the crowd's vain strife, and fall into the same small gentility of wishing, like Congreve, not to be thought a literary man. Gray, most of all, liked to be comfortable. Physical ease and quiet leisure were the first and last requisites with him. Gray would have been most unhappy in these days of hurry and turmoil.

The Elegy is the Apotheosis of Mediocrity. All the egoism of failure finds there its glorification; but it also appeals to every man who has the courage to measure his achievements by his aspirations!

“The world that credits what is done
Is cold to all that might have been.”

The Elegy is not only his masterpiece, but the poem least open to the charge of “over-elaboration,” “the high finish of the schools,” “the production of a well-trained academic scholar, lacking in spontaneity and fervour.” His poems should not be judged by any heroic standard. Such lofty flights were beyond the poet's genius. Rather they resemble highly finished cameos. Sir James Mackintosh



said that "Gray was, of all English poets, the most finished artist." Is it the most richly laden or the trimmer bark which floats farthest down the stream of time? "No one," said Charles Dickens, "ever went down to immortality with so small a volume under his arm!"

The church contains remains of all styles from Norman to Perpendicular Gothic. The chancel boasts a canopied tomb, and there are brasses to Sir William Molins, who was slain at the Siege of Orleans, 1429, and to the ladies Margaret and Eleanor. The manor came into the possession of the family from that of Poges about 1330. Gray's association with Stoke Poges commenced very early in life. Mrs. Rogers, an aunt of the poet, lived here, and he, in consequence, spent his College vacations here. In 1741, his mother and her sister, Mary Antrobus, made it their permanent residence, and Stoke Poges became henceforth Gray's home. Beneath the recumbent tomb, immediately under the east window (the window nearest the path in our illustration), were buried Mary Antrobus and his mother, Dorothy Gray. It was erected by Gray, and it bears upon it the poet's epitaph, to "a careful tender mother of many children, one of whom alone had the misfortune to survive her." Gray died in 1771, and in accordance with his last wishes, was laid in the same tomb, and thus lies at rest amidst the scene of his most cherished poem. There are more tombs than in Gray's time, and numerous gravestones rear their heads, and say what grave-stones say.

Close by the churchyard stands the old Manor House of Stoke Poges, the scene of Gray's "Long Story," a poem now scarcely remembered, or at all save by a few fine lines, and some little jewels of poetic expression, which have been picked out like plums, and re-set, or re-cast, and thus come down to us in the form of oft-repeated quotations illuming with glow-worm-like spark many a heavy passage of descriptive writing. The fine old place, with—according to Gray—

" Rich windows that exclude the light,
And passages that lead to nothing,"

has been reduced to one wing, possessing, however, in its picturesque gables, bayed windows, stacks of handsome carved chimney shafts, and other features of an Elizabethan manor house, evidence of what a stately house it once has been.

The interior, restored with great care, retains many traces of its early splendour and ancient hospitality. Some curious black leather "jacks," quite perfect, bearing the crown and date of 1646, are seen in the domestic offices, where there is a kitchen "capacious enough for the hospitality of an attorney-general, who had a queen for his guest," the wide fire-place, with heraldic sculptures, still remaining.

In the thirteenth century this ancient manor became the property of Robert Poges, knight of the shire, by marriage with Amicia de Stoke, and from them descended, through the Molins family, during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, until we find it in the possession of Hastings, Earl of Hun-

tingdon, who rebuilt the manor house in the time of Queen Elizabeth. It was subsequently seized by the Crown for debt ; but the extent of this claim does not appear, and the Earl of Huntingdon continued to reside here until his death in 1592. It then came into the possession of Sir Edward Coke, Lord Chief Justice, by purchase. Much error has long been current in connection with Coke's acquisition of this estate ; and Gray has also fallen into the same misapprehension, and depicted the grave Lord Keeper, Sir Christopher Hatton, whose elegant manners and graceful dancing, rather than his legal profundity, had secured Elizabeth's favour, as leading the brawls here, in the well-known lines :

“ Full oft within the spacious walls,
When he had fifty winters o'er him,
My grave Lord Keeper led the brawls,
The seals and maces danced before him.
His bushy beard and shoe-strings green,
His high crown'd hat and satin doublet,
Moved the stout heart of England's queen,
Though Pope and Spaniard could not trouble it,”

the poet evidently inferring, like others, that the Lord Chief Justice Coke acquired it by his marriage with Lady Hatton, the widow of the Lord Keeper's nephew, and heir to his title and estates. The simple fact is, Hatton never owned or occupied it ; nor did Coke acquire it by his marriage ; nor was it—according to other authorities—bestowed on him by James I. Sir Christopher Hatton died in 1591, a year before the Earl of Huntingdon died, at the old manor house of Stoke

Poges. Sir Edward was already a wealthy man ; besides the emoluments of his office, he had, with his first wife, a fortune of £30,000, an immense sum in those days, and could well afford to purchase it on the earl's death in 1592. He did not marry Lady Hatton until 1598, and in 1601, he entertained Queen Elizabeth here with great magnificence, presenting her with souvenirs in the form of jewellery to the value of more than a thousand pounds.

The Lady Hatton, of Hatton House, Ely Place, Holborn, sister of Thomas, Lord Burleigh, and widow of the Lord Keeper's nephew and heir, made such a conspicuous figure in her time, that the name of Hatton has thereby been stamped on all the traditions of Stoke Poges, and led to these errors. Young, rich, very beautiful, but with a vixenish temper, her hand became the object of numerous suitors. Two lawyers distanced all others in the race—Coke and Bacon—rivals in their profession, and rivals in love. Some curious scenes passed in Ely Place, and powerful supporters and partisans urged, now the merits of Coke, now those of Bacon. Coke prevailed, was married without duly observing all the requirements of the law, and afterwards had to defend himself by pleading “ignorance of the laws”—then carried his bride to Stoke Poges.

In 1603, after the accession of James I., Coke, as attorney-general, greatly exceeded the duty of a public prosecutor at the trial of Sir Walter Raleigh. His violent denunciation of the unfortunate Raleigh on the one hand, and fulsome adula-

tion of the king on the other, will ever remain a blot upon his fame; and though he condoned the offence by his patriotic conduct later in life, he was always open to the charge made by his enemies, that his patriotism arose more from disappointed ambition than from higher motives.

The language used by Coke, as recorded in the "State Trials," furnishes a curious commentary on the social usages of the time, and contrasts strongly with the calm judicial tone of the present day. To Raleigh, when on trial for his life, he brutally said, "Thou art a monster;" "thou hast an English face, but a Spanish heart;" "thou spider of Hell;" "Oh, damnable Atheist!" Even the judge—Chief Justice Popham—felt it necessary to apologize. "Sir Walter," said he, "Mr. Attorney speaks but out of the zeal of his duty for the king, and you for your life—be patient on both sides."

Coke greatly lowered himself in public estimation by this trial; but in 1605-6 he regained prestige by the great ability he displayed in unravelling the Gunpowder Plot. Years rolled away, his children grew up, and history has not forgotten his courageous answer to James I. after he had risen to be Lord Chief Justice of England.

In 1616, he lost Court favour by his unbending judicial integrity, and was deprived of his lord-chief-justiceship. Then came the weakest and least justifiable episode in his career, which was only redeemed by the nobility of his public life at its close. The great lawyer did not possess that independence of mind and those resources which alone enable a man

to bear solitude and an acquaintance with himself, and his retirement soon became insupportable.

The marriage of his daughter, Frances Coke, heiress of great wealth, to Sir John Villiers, brother of the powerful Court favourite, Buckingham, had before this time been proposed ; but the Lord Chief Justice would not entertain the idea. His mind now reverted to it, and he conceived a plan by which he might reinstate himself at Court and recover his lost dignities. He meanly, without consulting his daughter's or Lady Hatton's feelings in the matter, made known to Buckingham his desires and plans ; and the opposition his scheme met with from both mother and daughter led to all the broils and public scandal which is known to posterity as "The Strange History of Lady Hatton," related in Chambers' "Book of Days."

Sir Edward Coke's ideas were bounded by law, and he had been so accustomed to issue his commands as he would his law-writs, that disobedience to his mandate in this matter was, to his mind, almost inconceivable.

He was greatly elate at the success of his plan, and after talking over this distasteful match one night at Stoke, he retired to rest, and woke in the morning to find that both mother and daughter had run away ! For some little time he could gain no tidings of them, but at length ascertained that they were concealed at Oatlands.

Accompanied by a dozen sturdy men, well armed, he laid siege to Oatlands, and after two hours' resistance, took the

house by assault and battery, which Lady Hatton afterwards described to the Privy Council as Sir Edward Coke's "most notorious riot," in which he took down the doors of the gate-house and of the house itself. Having gained entrance to the house, he broke open door after door until he found the fugitives, and taking possession of his daughter, he carried her off to the manor-house at Stoke Poges and locked her up in an upper chamber, keeping the key of the door in his pocket.

Lady Hatton retired to her own house in Ely Place, and war commenced. The Privy Council were inundated with appeals and counter-appeals, and disturbed with brawls even at the council-table. The rank of the chief actors, and the partizanship which it evoked amongst the most powerful in the land, made the contest one of great public notoriety. Lady Hatton was wont to appear at the council-table supported by her brother, Lord Burghley, and his lady, the Lord Danvers, Lord Denny, Sir Thomas Howard, and many others. Her shrewish tongue and bitter declamation has been described by a spectator as "acting" equal to that of Burbage, the player.

The late Lord Chief Justice, from various causes, chiefly that of being at the time out of Court favour, appears to have got the worst of it, and the "oracle of law," with all his gravity, stood before the Council confessedly henpecked.

The following year (1617) war broke out again, this time with a different result. The political marriage of the heiress, Frances Coke, to Buckingham's brother, had too many attractions at Court to be resigned, and the King's favour thus being

obtained by his sycophants, Coke, armed by law, again took forcible possession of his daughter. Lady Hatton, in her virulence, had disfurnished, with malicious activity, his residences of many movables, &c. Coke charged her with "embezzling his gilt and silver plate," and had her imprisoned. Lady Hatton safely lodged in prison, Coke, as he himself expressed it, "got upon his wings again," and went on furiously with what his wife termed "his high-handed tyrannical courses," until the proud crest-fallen lady became seriously ill. "Law! law! law!" thundered from the lips of its "oracle;" and his rival, Bacon, in an apologetical letter to the King, for having opposed Coke's "riot or violence," says: "I disliked it the more because he justified it to be law, which was his old song."

Thus, with daughter locked up at Stoke, and his lady in prison, the great lawyer became master of the position, and was able to dictate terms. The marriage took place at Hampton Court, in presence of the King and Queen and the principal nobility. The manor of Stoke Poges was settled on the bridegroom, who was raised to the peerage as Baron Villiers of Stoke Poges, and Viscount Purbeck. The sequel was that which might be expected. The lady looked upon herself as sacrificed by a forced union, and sought consolation elsewhere. After nearly driving her husband mad, she deserted him, and lived with Sir Robert Howard. Nothing but misery to all parties concerned came of this ill-starred union. Lady Purbeck was divorced from her husband, and died young; but lived



St. John's Episcopal Church, New York City

long enough to attend upon her father in his solitary old age, when he had long seen the great error he had committed.

After the death of James I., in 1625, Coke's voice was heard to good purpose once more in the House of Commons; and in the last parliament of Charles (1628), when nearly in his eightieth year, the extraordinary vigour of his intellect flamed out clear under the snows of age. It was Coke who, on May 6, 1628, proposed the "Petition of Right," and the framing of it was, to a great extent, his. The importance of this measure need not be enlarged upon here. In one of the exciting debates of that crisis it is mentioned, "Old Coke, with the tears running down his furrowed face, got up, faltered, and sat down again."

In his old age he had the indignity put upon him by the Court of serving as Sheriff of the County, and had to attend in that capacity the assizes, where he had so often presided as Lord Chief Justice. His name, however, had been pricked for that office, in order to prevent his being chosen Member of Parliament for Buckinghamshire. In that parliament Hampden sat for the county.

After the dissolution of the last parliament, 28th March, 1628, Sir Edward Coke returned to Stoke Poges, where he spent the remainder of his days in retirement. On September the 3rd, 1634, he breathed his last, in the eighty-sixth year of his age, expiring with these words in his mouth, as his monument informs us, "Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done."

While he lay on his death-bed, Sir Francis Windebank, by

an order from Charles's Council—then governing the country without a parliament—came to search for seditious and dangerous papers, “by virtue whereof he took his ‘Commentaries upon Littleton,’ and the ‘History of his Life’ before it, written with his own hand; his ‘Commentary upon Magna Charta,’ the ‘Pleas of the Crown,’ and fifty-one other manuscripts, &c., and his will, wherein he had been making provision for his young grandchildren.” The books and papers were kept for seven years afterwards, when one of Sir Edward Coke's sons, in 1641, moved the House of Commons that the books and papers taken by order of the Council might be delivered up to Sir Robert Coke, the eldest son and heir, which was granted.

Such of the MSS. as could be found were delivered up; but Sir Edward Coke's will was never heard of more.

Lord Purbeck, elder brother of the Duke of Buckingham, assassinated by Felton, now succeeded to the estate, by virtue of the marriage settlement; but the house was settled upon Lady Hatton for her life. She died in 1644.

The old manor house was for a short time occupied by Charles I. after his seizure by the army from the custody of the Parliament. The exact period was from the 2nd August to the 24th August, 1647. The events which brought the King to the old manor house of Stoke Poges may be briefly recapitulated.

John Hampden's death took place, it will be remembered, in 1643. The year following (1644) was the year of Marston Moor, which decided the fate of the civil war in the North.

In 1645 came the decisive victory of the Parliamentary forces at Naseby. Yet Charles, with the entire selfishness that had characterized his whole career, and an inhuman indifference to all the calamities and suffering he had brought upon those whom he called his people, continued the civil war for more than a year after all hope of his cause was gone, and had the heartlessness to exact further sacrifices, even to the utter pecuniary ruin of many of his faithful adherents, and in many cases that of their lives also, in order to protract the useless struggle. The same year witnessed the subjugation of the West, and the next (1646), the surrender of Oxford, the last stronghold of the Royalists, the King having fled before this in disguise to the Scottish army, leaving his followers to their fate.

The end of the same year witnessed the surrender of the King by the Scots to the Parliamentary Commissioners, and in February, 1647, he arrived from the North in their charge, and was lodged at Holdenby House, in Northamptonshire. Then came the unhappy dissensions between the army and the Parliamentary majority; a dispute at first confined to the mere settlement of arrears of pay and other claims, but soon assuming a political aspect. The Commons insulted the army by voting that it was the enemy of the State, and the folly of Holles and his party brought about the most serious complications. Fearing the Presbyterian party meditated a design of making a separate treaty with the King, the army-leaders determined on sending a party of horse to seize and carry off

his person. Fairfax, the commander-in-chief, strongly disapproved of this act, but Charles's position was so much improved thereby that he flatly refused to return to Holdenby House and the custody of the Parliament. Fairfax was placed in a delicate position, and he behaved with the utmost kindness and consideration to the unhappy monarch, who had nevertheless to accommodate himself in some measure to the movements of the army, and he was lodged as the honoured guest of the nearest nobleman or magnate in the neighbourhood. He first passed two or three days at Colonel Montague's at Hinchinbrook, and then was taken to the house of Sir John Cutts at Childersley, and afterwards to Newmarket at his own desire, while the army remained at St. Alban's. When Fairfax's quarters were removed to Wycombe, Charles became the guest of the Earl of Salisbury at Hatfield. His friends were allowed free access to him, and his children were permitted to visit him. On the 24th of July the head-quarters were removed to Bedford, and the King became the guest of the Earl of Bedford at Woburn Abbey.

Here came to him one of those golden opportunities of retrieving the past, which any man of honourable intentions and less fatuous judgment would have turned to account. The folly and treachery of Charles at this juncture is almost inconceivable, except on the theory that "whom the gods mean to destroy they first deprive of their reason." Fairfax had given every opportunity and indulgence to the King—freedom of access to all his supporters, and every means of

carrying on a successful negotiation with the victorious party had been placed at his disposal. Men of the highest consideration had been working hard in his interests to bring about a settlement; the German princes, who were a standing offence to many of his own supporters, had left the country, finally, after the fall of Oxford. The most notorious of the two was known to the Royalists as Prince Rupert of Cumberland, but the English people, whose homes he had plundered and burnt, and whose hearths he had made desolate, long execrated the memory of the cruel foreign adventurer who they always called Prince Robber of Plunderland. Everything conspired to render the occasion favourable, and here at Woburn definite proposals on the part of the army for the settlement of the kingdom were made to Charles.

These proposals, states Mr. Markham, in his "Life of Fairfax," were *very* moderate, and "the whole subject was debated with the King, and even several things struck out that he disliked. It appears that episcopacy was not only to be tolerated, but to be the religion of the State, so long as bishops had no coercive powers, and the other provisions were only such as we have now long enjoyed! Had Charles accepted them honourably and unreservedly, he would have been restored to the throne as a constitutional king. But honour and truth were unknown to him. At that very moment he was intriguing with the Scots through Lauderdale, and with the Presbyterians in London, and he had intelligence that the latter were on the point of an outbreak which he thought

might be successful. He therefore contemptuously rejected the proposal of the army, and treated the officers with such haughtiness that his own agent, Berkeley, remonstrated at his folly and intemperance."

Thus Charles let the tide that should have been taken at the flood pass by. The riots got up by Holles and his hot-headed friends, known to history as "The Eleven Members," brought Fairfax's army to London.

Leaving Bedford on the 2nd of August, the general fixed his head-quarters at Colnbrook, so associated with the memory of John Milton, and the King was lodged in Sir Edward Coke's old manor house of Stoke Poges. Such is the irony of fate that we now see Charles deposited as a prisoner in the very house and chamber of the man whose death-bed he had so rudely desecrated under a royal warrant, but thirteen years before.

In this quiet retirement beside Gray's Church, with the ivy-mantled tower, containing tombs and brasses of a date as long prior as the reign of Henry VI., Charles learned on what a reed he had placed his hopes, and for what a shadow he had thrown away his undeserved opportunity.

Within sight of the house stood the proud towers of Windsor Castle, which he was destined never to enter again, except for interment in St. George's Chapel. Its stately rooms were enriched by many proofs of his fine taste and love of the arts, one of the redeeming points in his character; but, alas! to be æsthetic is not to fulfil every human obligation.

Magnificent examples of Vandyke's power in art exhibit the beauty of Queen Henrietta Maria, whose great influence, ever exerted on the wrong side, was undoubtedly most disastrous to Charles ; so clearly so, that she was warned of it by her mother, Mary de' Medicis, during her long visit of more than a year to England. Smollett has gone so far as to call Charles a *munificent* patron of the arts ! The fact is, that defect in the King's moral perceptions—or, according to Mr. Gardiner, his mental ones—which rendered any engagements he entered into wholly illusory—considering himself at once above and beyond such small ties when called upon to fulfil them—entered into his relations with Vandyke, whose bills he left unpaid, or cut them down remorselessly, paying ten shillings in the pound, *e. g.* £100 for “Le Roi alla ciassa,” charged £200 by the painter, and sold in 1810 for £4,000. Henrietta followed the example of the “blessed martyr,” and paid about the same proportion of “composition” for exceedingly moderate charges, urging only a woman's reason—her own imperious will. No painter in the present day would submit to it, and so far from Charles being the *munificent* patron of Vandyke, Charles was much more indebted to Vandyke than Vandyke to Charles. His splendid works glorified Charles, and showed his best side to the English people. The painter of such works needed not the King. Vandyke would have been Vandyke had Charles never existed. Vandyke must have sometimes received these Court summonses at his quiet retreat at Eltham without any feeling of joy. Happily, in our

own age, the word *patron*, as regards art and literature, has no longer any meaning.

Fairfax reviewed his troops the next day on Hounslow Heath, attended by a brilliant staff of powerful nobles and statesmen. On the 5th of August, the general and his army were quartered at Hammersmith and the surrounding country, and the next morning made their entry into London, escorted the Lords and Commons to Westminster, and then took formal possession of the Tower.

Charles remained at Stoke Poges until the 24th of August, when he was removed to permanent quarters at Hampton Court, and the episode that connects Charles with the old manor-house closed.

On the death of Viscount Purbeck, Coke's son-in-law, which took place 1656, the manor of Stoke Poges was sold to John Gayer, Esq., of London, who bequeathed it to his younger brother Robert. After the Restoration he was knighted by Charles II., and *Sir* Robert Gayer was ever after exuberant in his loyalty to the House of Stuart.

It is related by Lipscombe that Gayer in his old age became sometimes very captious, being much afflicted with the gout. Stoke House had been recently restored with considerable splendour, and had become an object of some interest and curiosity. Amongst others, King William desired to inspect a place so rich in past associations; but his visit had the effect of throwing the old knight into a violent passion, and he vehemently swore that he would never permit

the King to come under his roof. "He has got possession of another man's house already—he is a usurper; tell him to go back." In vain Lady Gayer interposed; not prevailing, she fell upon her knees, and entreated Sir Robert to let the King—who was all this time waiting in his coach at the door—see the house. But he only railed the more furiously, and declared "an Englishman's house was his castle, and that he would never permit the King to come within those walls." So his Majesty went back and never saw Stoke Poges.

Thus it came to be said of the old manor house, that it had magnificently entertained one sovereign; been the prison of another; and had refused admission to a third! After several times changing hands, it became the property of the heirs of William Penn, the founder of Pennsylvania, one of whom—John Penn—erected in 1799 the large stone cenotaph to the memory of Gray. It is now in the possession of Edward Coleman, Esq., who has restored it in an admirable manner, the old dining-hall being reconstructed under the superintendence of Sir Edwin Landseer.



Besides Sir Edward Coke another legal luminary was intimately associated with Stoke Poges at the same period: Sir Henry Marten, Knt., Judge of the Arches. He was a distinguished scholar, and had formerly been a Fellow of New

College, Oxford. Possessed of considerable property around here, and in the adjoining county of Berks, his son, Henry Marten—afterwards one of the great statesmen of the Commonwealth—according to Anthony Wood, was born at Stoke Poges, 1602. Others have, however, named Oxford as the place of his birth. In either case the name and property held by the family has, to a certain extent, identified Henry Marten with Stoke Poges. He was educated at Oxford, and afterwards travelled in France, and became notorious for his libertinism. “He was a great lover of pretty girls,” records Aubrey, “to whom he was so liberal that he spent the greater part of his estate.” The process of wild-oat sowing was as distasteful to Sir Henry as to other paterfamilias, and he at length found a rich wife for his son, who was married somewhat unwillingly.

The great part he subsequently took in the momentous events of his time, and his close, uninterrupted association with the stern puritanical leaders, who appeared so opposite to him in everything, is one of the most curious studies.

This fine gentleman, a Cavalier by instincts, was in principles a Republican. He was no butterfly, however, but a man of great ability, and his remarkably masculine intellect was deeply imbued with the republican spirit of antiquity. “And,” again writes Aubrey, “he was a great and faithful lover of his country.” Free-handed, a hater of all self-seeking, the soul of generosity, always taking the part of the oppressed ; wrong, suffering, injustice, found in this ardent soul

a no less warm or more fearless advocate than in the greatest Puritan that ever existed. Of a sufficiently weighty mental calibre to dispense with arrogance, or the solemnity affected by some of his colleagues, he plunged into the gravest debates with some pungent flash of wit that carried the House with him. Keen of tongue, fearless almost to recklessness, above all dissimulation, the transparent honesty and *bon-homme* of the man disarmed even those who were the subject of his sharp-edged satire. His weapon was of the finest tempered steel, as contrasted with the coarser blades of some of his colleagues. All of them knew and bowed to the fact, that this able and remarkable person was, above all, a thoroughly honest man.

Charles feared and hated him, not only politically but personally. Marten was mentally infinitely Charles's superior, and dissolute though he was, treachery, falsehood, pride, and greed were entirely foreign to his nature. Aubrey relates that on one occasion Marten was in Hyde Park when his Majesty was there for the purpose of seeing a race. The King, ever childishly fond of showing his resentments, found an opportunity of gratuitously insulting him, saying aloud, with a gross expression, that he would not stay unless "that ugly rascal be gone out of the Park." "So Henry Marten went away patiently, saying, *sed manebat alta mente repostum*. That sarcasm rased the whole countie of Bucks against him (the King)." "He was as far from a puritane as light from darknesse * * * S^r Edw. Beyntom was wont to say that his

companie was incomparable ; but that he would be drunke too soon. His speeches in the House were not long, but wondrous poynant, pertinent and witty. He was extraordinarily happy in apt instances, and alone sometimes turned the whole House." Holding republican opinions, it is the distinction of Henry Marten to have been (according to Clarendon) the first who openly avowed them, expressed thus, "I do not think one man wise enough to govern us all."

When his father, Sir Henry Marten, died in 1641, he inherited property to the amount of £3,000 a year, a large income then, and he indulged his liberal tastes and elegant desires in so profuse a manner at Beckett, his country seat, near Shrivenham, that the whole county of Berks rang with the festivities of the Vale of the White Horse.

It is related in Lyon's "*Magna Brittania*" that Sir Henry Marten also, by his will, bearing date 1641, bequeathed the sum of £3,000, owed him by the King, for the purpose of founding almshouses for five poor people at Longworth, and for ten poor people at Shrivenham. It is scarcely necessary to add that the money was never paid, and the foundation never took effect.

When the reign of Parliament began, after twelve years' interregnum, Henry Marten, then in his thirty-ninth year, sat as county member for Berks.

Of all the apostles of Republicanism Marten was the most extreme, and the unconstitutional acts of the King found no more ardent or formidable opponent than the member for

Berks. He said openly, as also did Sir Peter Wentworth, that the House could not confide in the King or trust him. The entire absence of reserve in Marten's character not only exposed him to much animadversion, when more prudent men, who fully shared his opinions, escaped notice, but caused him to feel and constantly to express the greatest aversion to anything approaching compromise. The assumption of importance and affectation of superior knowledge on the part of some of the members of the Committee roused Marten's bile, and provoked his inherent hatred of pomposity and clap-trap of any kind. With everybody in authority Marten, *ipso facto*, had an inchoate quarrel, although personally he was far from being a great hater, and he quickly forgave personal injuries. To show how far men's minds were from contemplating the end that ultimately came, Marten, when he made that blunt declaration after Hampden's death in June, 1643, was committed to the Tower. And it also shows how entirely that end was the King's own bringing about. When Marten was released from the Tower, and returned to his seat in the House, he was received with applause.

From that date Marten's name appears in every public transaction. Marten's wit enlivened the dull House, and Marten's mental fireworks must have been the dread of the "unco' gude," and the solemnly stupid. Aubrey has preserved for us many anecdotes of this period.

Henry Marten let fall some phrases in the course of one of the discussions which gave great offence to a Puritan

member. The latter suggested that it would be well to have a motion to expel all "profane and unsanctified persons" from the House. Upon this Marten got up again, and gravely observed "that he should take the liberty to move before the motion alluded to, that 'All fools might be put out likewise,' and then," he added, "the House might probably be found thin enough."

Aubrey also tells that Marten was wont to sleep much in the House, and afterwards explain this by saying it was "dog-sleep," or, in other words, a means resorted to on the occasion of any very prosy oration from an alderman or a Puritan, to intimate his fatigue, and hint the propriety either of liveliness or a conclusion on the part of the speaker. On one of these occasions, when Marten seems not only to have been "sleeping," but nodding his head rather vehemently, and breaking into occasional interruptions, Alderman Atkins made a motion, "that such scandalous members as slept, and minded not the business of the House, should be put out." Henry Marten *starts* up :— "Mr. Speaker, a motion has been made to turn out the noddies; I desire the noddees (noddies) may also be turned out." Poor Alderman Atkins never fairly recovered this.

On another occasion, in referring to his own case, then unsettled, and to some recent and questionable appointments, he observed in a manner that provoked peculiar laughter, "That he had seen at last the Scripture fulfilled,— 'Thou hast exalted the humble and meek, Thou hast filled the

empty with good things, and the rich hast Thou sent empty away!’”

He was one of the first to penetrate Cromwell's designs ; and early in their incipient stage he found occasion to vent his ominous belief in a sally of humour. Cromwell, in the heat of some debate in the House, called his old friend *Sir* Henry Marten (doubtless from old association of the title with the name borne by Marten's father, the Judge), when, with infinite gravity, Mr. Henry Marten rises and bows, “*I thank your Majesty!* I always thought when you were King, that I should be knighted.”

Marten was ever on the humane side, and when mercy was to be shown, or an act of liberal and kind-hearted justice done, his name and the record of his best exertions are sure not to be found wanting. It was Marten who proposed and carried the repeal of the statute of banishment against the Jews which had been in force for more than three hundred years. He preserved the life of the author of “*Gondibert*,” by rising when the proposition of his death was in agitation, and infusing mirth and good humour into the House by observing that really Will Davenant was but a rotten and improper subject, and that sacrifices “by the Mosaic law” were always required to be pure and without blemish !

Both sides had their little difficulties in raising funds to carry on the war. If Charles melted down the college plate, the Parliament had also to devise “ways and means ;” and Marten displayed great fertility of resource in the hour of

need. On one of these occasions it occurred to him that there would be no further need of the regalia, and that they might as well sell it for what it would bring, and moreover, had not Queen Henrietta set the example? Dr. Peter Heylin in his "History of the Presbyterians," says further, that Marten ordered the sub-dean of Westminster to bring him to the place where the regalia was kept, and having forced open a great iron chest, took out the crown, the robes, the sword, the sceptre, belonging originally to Edward the Confessor, and used by all the kings at their inauguration, declaring there would be no further use of these toys and trifles, and in the folly of that humour invested the old poet George Withers with them. The story that follows is doubtless somewhat exaggerated, for the "old poet" was a deeply religious man of the sterner mould, and his sacred poetry has won from Charles Lamb golden praise. His "Hallelujah," a sacred poem of 400 pages, has, notwithstanding its tedious length, such enduring freshness and vitality, that a new edition has only recently been printed. He also was a landed gentleman, and made great sacrifices for his principles; sold his estate, and raised a troop of horse for the Parliament, in whose army he held the rank of major. These opposites—Marten and Withers—as divided as the poles in the matter of self-government, had yet something in common, for George Withers had undoubtedly a strata of grim humour in his composition, perhaps best preserved in his well-known song,

“Shall I, wasting in despair,
Die because a woman’s fair?
Or make pale my cheeks with care,
’Cause another’s rosy are?
Be she fairer than the day,
Or the flow’ring meads in May :
If she be not so to me,
What care I how fair she be?”

Dr. Heylin goes on to state that the old poet, “invested in the royal habiliments, and being thus crowned and royally arrayed (as well became him) first marched about the room with a stately mien, and afterwards, with a thousand apish and ridiculous actions, exposed these sacred ornaments to contempt and laughter.”

Merciful and kind-hearted, no one could be firmer in the right place. No unbiassed and patient inquirer into the materials of history, rather than history as written by partizans, can fail to be convinced that Charles had conspired against the liberties of his country to a degree past condonation; and at Naseby he actually brought into the field with him the evidences that he was even then intriguing to increase the miseries of the country by importing a foreign army of mercenaries. When the meetings took place as to the course to be adopted with one whom they no longer could trust, Marten, who, as colonel in the army, attended, was the first who had the honesty to utter openly at this great crisis what was in the minds of all, and cut the matter short by telling them “they should serve his Majesty as the English did his Scotch grandmother,—cut off his head.”

To Marten was referred all the alterations in the public arms, in the Great Seal, and in the coin of the realm. The vote is thus recorded: "The present seal be broken up." "In the first year of freedom," &c. "Marten's fancy," says White-locke. It is related that when Charles took his place for the great trial in Westminster no visible sign of emotion escaped him until his eye fell upon the escutcheon with the newly designed arms of the Commonwealth.

In the last days of the Commonwealth Marten was the first to see through the intrigues and double-dealing of Monk, and took occasion to say in the House that although Monk affected devotion to the Commonwealth, the remarkable inaptitude of the means he took to preserve it was curious. "Why, Sir," he continued, "he is like a person sent to make a suit of clothes who brings with him a budget full of carpenter's tools!"

At the Restoration he disdained to fly, pleaded not guilty, and Morton's Statute—pleaded also by Vane, and years after by Algernon Sidney—and strange to say escaped the penalty of death. Marten's escape, while others suffered, and even the graves of the dead were desecrated, is one of the most inexplicable things in the history of the time. He was the foremost advocate of the King's death, was one of his judges, and personally obnoxious to him. It was Marten that caused the King's statue at the Old Royal Exchange to be taken down; it was Marten who introduced a bill for the sale of the royal property in lands, houses, furniture, jewels, paint-

ings, and other works of art. He had opposed Cromwell, certainly, but so had Vane and Sidney. He denounced Monk when no one else did. He had been exuberant in his republicanism, and—which offends more than all—had assailed the kingly office with unsparing ridicule, with the most brilliant shafts of his subtle wit, edged with the sharpest satire. But here was this—by repute—dissolute liver, with a courage that wins our admiration, ready to take the consequences of his acts—no craven—no political Vicar of Bray—while men of stricter life made dishonourable compromise.

It is alleged that it was owing to Lord Falkland's turning the temper of the House by his wit. But "his wit" is a simple plagiarism of Marten's own, in saving the life of the author of "Gondibert." We give it as related. "Marten having been one of the late King's judges was in very great danger to have suffered as others did, but (as he was a witte himselfe) so the Lord Falkland saved his life by witt, saying, 'Gentlemen, yee talke here of making a sacrifice ;—it was old lawe, all sacrifices were to be made without spott or blemish ; and now you are going to make an old rotten rascall a sacrifice.' This witt took in the House and saved his life." That many Royalists were under deep obligations to him is a more valid reason, and that *he* was not one of the "sanctified" is another, but putting all three together, in view of the atrocities committed after the Restoration, they are insufficient to account for his remarkable escape.

"He was first confined in the Tower, then at Windsore

(removed thence because he was a eie-sore to his Ma^{tie}, &c.) and then to Chepstowe." At Chepstow he was treated with great lenity, and lived twenty years after this his escape from the scaffold, dying in 1680, aged 78 years. He was not confined in a cell, but with his wife had comfortable apartments, and was allowed to make excursions and visits in the neighbourhood.

Firm, frank, fearless to the last, he never repudiated his acts or his principles. With regard to the King's death-warrant, he vowed he would sign it again. Consoled by the long-estranged affection and attention of his wife and daughter, his end was not devoid of consolation, or memories of duties done, and a consistent public life, spent in the service of his country.

A great and good man once observed that nothing in his career had given him more surprise than the amount of what was bad he had found in good men, or the great amount of what was good he had found in bad men.

Men should be estimated by the mass of character! A block of gold may have an alloy of baser metal. A block of tin may have a vein of gold. Who shall say that the nobler metal did not predominate in Henry Marten?



Our summer's task is done. The old homes—their homes—are with us still, but it is only in imagination that we re-people them with those who knew them so well—only in thought that we pace the long galleries, or sit by the old firesides, and listen to the *ou dits* of bygone years! And now the last footfall dies away. While we wrote they were bodily present :—we saw Sidney's handsome form ; Anne Boleyn's deep eyes and strawberry mole ; Rupert's bold, swarthy face ; Hampden's tall, manly form and grave, thoughtful profile.

They are but the human deposits of a particular strata, even as we all shall be gathered in that now in course of deposition. The earth is one vast tomb, and Gray was right so far as life's brief day is concerned, “for they that creep and they that fly, but end where they began.” Seen in the historic perspective of a given distance, the bright hues of earth's fairest flowers are scarcely more transient. Soon the leaves fall ; and mother-earth takes them back again, and covers them with hands unseen.





